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The Last Supper
(1468)
St. Peter's Church,
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Figure 2

Duris, Hercules and Athena

c. 480 B.C.

Staatliche Antikensammlung,

Munich

Figure 3
St. Peter's Square, Rome

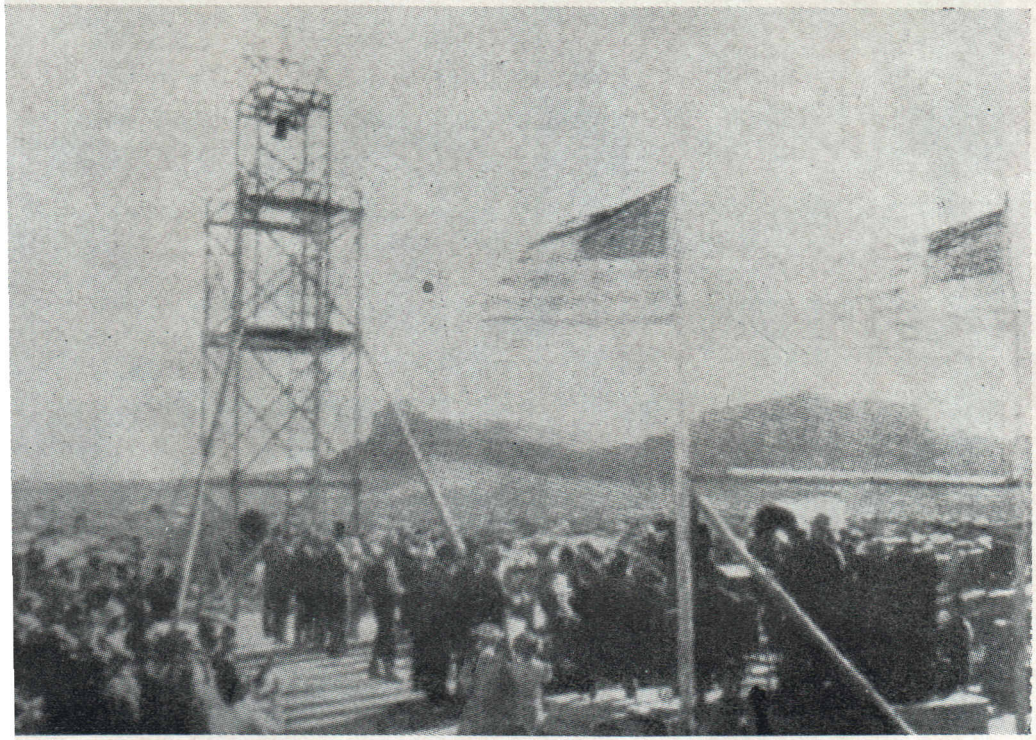

Figure 4

Figure 5

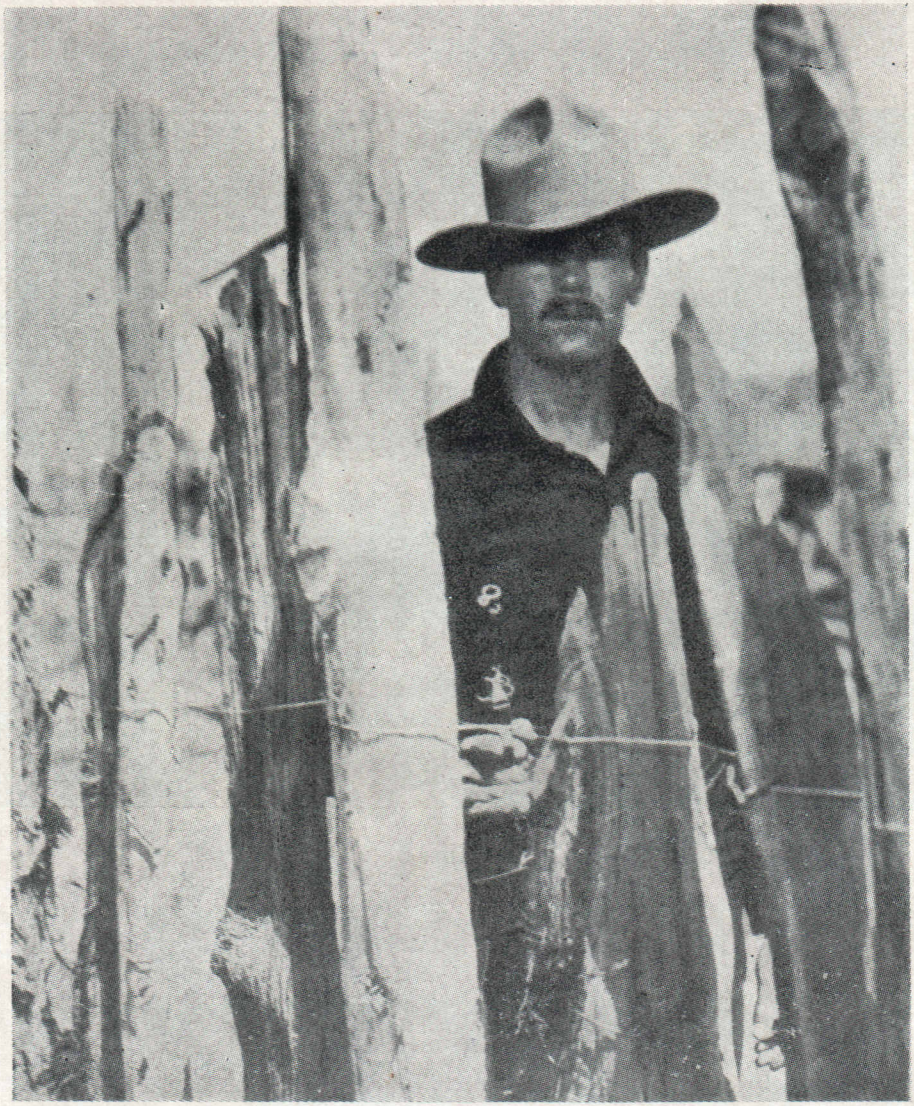

Figure 6

Figure 7

Figure 8

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Autobiographical

HAROLD OSBORNE

It is sometimes said, with a touch of deliberate paradox, that all fiction, even the most phantastic, is in reality autobiographical. Be that as it may, we all know persons who are their own favourite and most fertile topic of conversation, while there are others who will speak only reluctantly about themselves. I confess that I belong to the taciturn kind. It was therefore with some dismay that I received the request to write an autobiographical statement for this number of the so excellent *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*.

I started my academic career, then, as a classicist, taking a degree at Cambridge University in Classics with distinction in Ancient Philosophy. This was followed by a Stanton Fellowship and a second tripos in Philosophy of Religion. For this I read Philosophy under C. D. Broad and F. R. Tennant and attended the lectures of McTaggart. My first book, *Foundations of the Philosophy of Value*, was published by the Cambridge University press in 1933.

While still an undergraduate I was fortunate to enjoy the friendship of Arnold Haskell, who later became known for his connections with British Ballet. At this time he was building up his collection of contemporary paintings and drawings and owned a small gallery in Conduit Street.[1] His influence stimulated and broadened my incipient interest in modern art and aesthetic values in general and I have always remembered our friendship with gratitude.

In the 1930s I founded and organised the Cambridge University Arts Society, arranging weekly talks by practising artists in term time and small

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exhibitions in the Gordon Fraser Gallery. I enjoyed an extensive acquaintance among artists, counting Frank Dobson, Maurice Lambert, Leon Underwood, Henry moore, Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Mark Gertler, together with the critics Roger Fry, R. H. Wilenski and Herbert Read as special friends. These people among many others helped my powers of appreciation gradually to mature and this, combining with a continued interest in philosophy, laid the foundations for my later work in aesthetics. But before I was ready to write in this field there came the interruption of the war. One lesson I did learn, however, which has not been nullified by a fairly long and diversified experience, and that is the wisdom of Ruth Saw's statement that an aesthetician must always be prepared to face objections from "people who think they know it all without bothering to find out.[2] "

During the war I was employed in the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office in close contact with the Underground Resistance Movements of Poland and Czechoslovakia. There was no opportunity for philosophy or aesthetics. After the war I spent a number of years in diplomatic service as First Secretary (Commercial) in the British Embassy, La Paz. Here I was able to acquire some familiarity with the very different appreciative demands of the Pre-Columbian arts of Peru. It was not until my return in the 1950s, however, that I was able to begin writing in aesthetics. *Theory of Beauty* was published in 1952, *Aestheiics and Criticism* in 1955, both by Routledge and Kegan Paul. In 1960, in conjuction with Herbert Read and Ruth Saw, I founded *The Btitish Journal of Aesthetics*, and continued as sole editor until 1977, when the present editor, Terry Diffey of Sussex University, took over. As my own views in Philosophical Aesthetics continued to develop and mature they were often formulated or "tried out" in articles contributed to this journal, particularly the later issues. Throughout these years I was encouraged and assisted by Professors Alec Mace and Louis Arnaud Reid. My debt to both is greater than I can easily express.

The two books on aesthetics written in the 1950s were concerned with central problems arising from the attempt to establish the criteria by which works of art are assessed in relation to each other and differentiated from artifacts which are not considered as classical statements of a "formalistic" theory of aesthetics. There was indeed emphasis upon form as the objective correlate of the specifically aesthetic value as distinct from the many other values which works of art carry but which are carried also by non-aesthetic objects. For a value which is common to a number of things cannot serve as a principle of distinction between them. A similar insight inspired the work of Monroe C. Beardsley and those who followed in his steps. But in my writing there was no implication that aesthetic value is

necessarily or always more important than the other values which an artifact may carry. Indeed in these books I already advanced the suggestion that in our critical assessments of works of art two distinct criteria are involved, stature or greatness and aesthetic quality. This idea was further developed in my Presidential Address to The British Society of Aesthetics, published in *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (1984) under the title "Assessment and Stature." In connection with the literary and performing arts I also proposed the germ of a theory of "concretisation" which attracted the interest of Roman Ingarden as an analogue of his own theory of "concretisation," although I had not read his writings at that time.

These lines of thought led to the conclusion that aesthetic value is the property which some things possess of stimuleting and supporting a kind of awareness peculiar to them and distinct from conceptualised knoweldge. They exercise, expand and enlarge *percipience* in the sense of direct apprehension as distinct from knowledge or understanding *about* a thing, however complex the thing may be. This insight was developed in *The Art of Appreciation* (1970), in the series "Appreciation of the Arts" which I edited for the Oxford University Press. Here I argued that aesthetic appreciation is a skill which, like other skills, requires cultivation and that it consists centrally in the enhancement of sensibility. The implications of this for education were developed in two articles, "Creativity, Progress and Personality" and "The Cultivation of Sensibility in Education," contributed in 1984 to the *Journal of Philosophy of Education.*

The term "aesthetic value" has two conceptually distinct meanings which are not always kept apart. As already described, it may refer to the properties in virtue of which, aesthetic objects are discriminated from other things and assessed in relation to each other. These are the properties which render them capable of evoking and sustaining aesthetic experience. And the understanding of aesthetic experience, or "disinterested perception," arose gradually, as described by Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz[3], along with the differentiation of the fine arts from the useful handicrafts, in the course of the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. But "aesthetic value" also refers to the value we place upon aesthetic experience it self in comparison to the many other activities in which human beings may indulge. As George Dickie has emphasized, aesthetic value in the former sense is derivative from this latter value even in such otherwise drivers aesthetic theories as those of Beardsley and Goodman.[4] Latterly I have been concerned with this latter value and the problems it raises. In several recent articles I have suggested an evolutionary context for the understanding of this, as follows.-

We are faced with the initial parodox that in advanced societies cultivation of the fine arts is regarded with pretty general agreement as an important cultural value although in fact only a relatively small minority of people is actively interested in them. In the course of evolution human beings developed faculties of intelligence, observation, curiosity, prediction, etc., which served the practical purposes of survival and more comfortable living and eventually enabled mankind to achieve its present position of dominance in the biosphere and to overpopulate the earth. When these faculties are exercised and cultivated for the sake of their own refinement and perfection instead of for practical and biological ends, we speak of "cultural values." So when intelligence is exercised for its own sake and not merely as an element in the survival mechanism of mankind there emerge the cultural value of philosophy, logic, mathematics and theoretical science. Curiosity is not merely a human drive but in one form or another is operative throughout sentient life, leading to that familiarity with the environment which favours successful adaptation or control. The cat carefully investigates before settling down in a new environment. Among human beings curiosity when combined with intelligence and freed from utilitarian functions is the motive force of the search for truth, the sciences of cosmology, particle physics and molecular biology on the one hand and on the other hand of such disciplines as history and archaeology. Aesthetic experience is the cultivation for its own sake of the faculty of percipience, or direct apprehension, which underlies all our metal functions. This is its nature and this it is that establishes its position as a cultural value. The paradox we noticed is common, if less conspicuously, to other recognised cultural values. It is on these lines, I believe, that an explanation and understanding of aesthetic value is to be found.

In addition to the persons already mentioned, I welcome this opportunity of acknowledging my inestimable debt to many contemporaries and colleagues, without whose help I could have achieved nothing. In particular I have learned much from R. K. Elliott and Ruby Meager.

Notes and References

1. Arnold Haskell: *Ballet* (1935); *Black on White* (1933).
2. Ruth L. Saw: *Aesthetics: An Introduction* (1971), P. 15.
3. Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz: *History of Aesthetics* (Eng. Trans., 1970-1974).
4. George Dickie, "Evaluating Art" in *The Brstish Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 25, No.1 (1985).

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Metaphysical Pessimism and Samuel Beckett

HENNING JENSEN

HAMM:
Imagine if a rational being came back to earth,
wouldn't he be liable to get ideas into his head
if he observed us long enough.
(*Voice of rational being.*)
Ah, good, now I see what it is, yes, now I understand what they're at ![1]

Samuel Beckett once said that the way to understand his plays is to talk, not about philosophy, but about situations.[2] While agreeing fervently that no amount of philosophical talk could ever by itself constitute an understanding of his plays, it will be my contention that the rational being which Hamm imagines as returning to earth would achieve a good deal of understanding of where Beckett's characters are at by considering them in the light of the conceptual framework emerging from recent discussions of the meaning of life question by writers such as Paul Edwards, Thomas Nagel, Kurt Baier, and others.[3] More specifically, I shall contend that, in the light of this framework, the characters and action in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* give expression to what I shall identify as a kind of metaphysical pessimism. At the same time, I shall contend that consideration of this conceptual framework contributes to our interpretation of the literary structure as ironic and, therefore, to strong recommendations as to how these plays are to be viewed and read. The first part

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of my paper will be devoted to a discussion of this framework. In the second part I shall apply this discussion to Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*.

To prevent utter misunderstanding of my intentions, some strong disclaimers are necessary. By no means do I suggest that the conceptual framework which I shall explore as a background for discussion of Beckett is the only one which might throw light on his plays. Also, although the framework I explore may contribute towards an understanding of other works by Beckett, I shall restrict the scope of my examination to Beckett's two best known plays, *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*. Finally, as regards the author's intentions, I doubt very much that Beckett was consciously and intentionally writing within this conceptual framework.

Questions concerning the meaning of life are notoriously ambiguous. It must therefore be emphasized that the questions which are central to my discussion are not those which concern the various purposes which a person has and his attempts to find an overall meaningfulness in his life. Instead the questions which concern me are those which arise in response to claims that our serious human concerns are ultimately meaningless, pointless, and even absurd. I want to sketch briefly some features of the general framework for such claims which has been developed in recent discussions of the meaning of life question. In his well-known article "The Absurd," Thomas Nagel maintains that our sense of the absurd arises out of the discrepancy between our serious aspirations and those broader perspectives which are available to us in imagination and from which these aspirations are seen as meaningless, pointless, and coming to nothing. At first glance, the broader perspectives in question would appear to be rather diverse in character. Nagel refers to them at various times as including a capacity to view life *sub specie aeternitatis*, to feign a nebula's-eye view, to view ourselves from a distant time and place, and to view ourselves and our presuppositions as arbitrary and idiosyncratic. However, behind this apparent diversity, these perspectives have in common that they are all generated by a sense of limitations and, most important, they are perspectives from which, since they disclose no standards, we have no reason to believe that anything matters. And since nothing matters from these perspectives, it is easy to see why Nagel maintains that the sense of the absurd which arises out of the discrepancy between our serious aspirations and these broader perspectives need in itself have no practical significance. He concludes: "If a sense of the absurd is a way of perceiving our true situation, then what reason can we have to resent or escape it?"[4] Our absurd lives may therefore, he believes, be approached with irony and resignation.

As regards the foregoing account, it seems undeniable that there are clashing perspectives of the sort described by Nagel which generate a sense of absurdity

and which may well be viewed with a detached attitude of irony. However, the most striking weakness of this account is that it fails to do justice to the actual responses of most persons to the absurdity of life. Readers of such works as *Ecclesiastes*, Tolstoi's *My Confession*, Chekov's *Uncle Vanya*, Thomas Wolfe's *You Can't Go Home Again*, and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* will surely insist that in their treatments of the absurdity and meaninglessness of life the authors in question have considered aspects of the human condition which are of momentous import and which, as a matter of fact, are deeply disturbing. At the same time, readers are likely to have felt that these works serve as guides for the perplexed and have implications for how we ought to live. Nagel's account, intent upon explaining why the perception of absurdity need not matter, contributes little towards an explanation of why this perception does in fact matter so much to us.

I want therefore to present an alternative account which will do justice to the datum that a sense of human absurdity is a very deeply disturbing part of the human condition and which will provide a plausible explanation of why this is the case. Whereas Nagel's account is deeply imbued with features which draw upon Hume, I shall present arguments which, as so often happens, find in Kant an alternative to Hume. However, in what follows my procedure will not be to explicate Kant, but only to sketch an argument whose beginning outlines derive from Kant.[5]

The Kantian argument, not unlike Nagel's in this respect, is much concerned with the fact that as we attempt to extend our knowledge, we cannot but be aware of the limited and conditional character of our explanations. They are limited and conditional, first of all, because the general laws to which we appeal in our explanations do not have the kind of necesssity characterizing mathematical or logical systems, but are concerned with what in fact occurs. Second, they are limited and conditional in that the objects or occurrences to be explained are explained in terms of earlier objects or occurrences which are in the very same need of explanation. But since our everyday explanations tend to be directed towards limited and specific problems, the fact that our explanations are limited does not in itself render them unsatisfactory.

At this point the Kantain argument gives much emphasis to a feature of the situation in question which plays little or no role in Nagel's account. In the situation in which we attempt to extend our knowledge and yet become aware of the limited character of our explanations, Kant maintains that human reason has a natural inclination to overstep these limits and to set before itself the ideal of completeness, finality and systematic unity in our explanations. He defends the

worth of this ideal as providing an important incentive and guide to our continuing attempts to achieve understanding of the world But, at the same time, this ideal is quite empty in that there is no object of knowledge answering to it. It should be emphasized that the propensity to frame such an ideal is not the result of the sophistries of misguided philosophers but is, Kant insisted, a natural propensity of hunan reason. He warns repeatedly against the "deceptive illusion" produced by mistaking this purely regulative ideal for a claim to the kind of constitutive principles of transcendent knowledge which would provide us with unconditional explanations. Such an error, for example, is at the root of our framing an ideal of unconditional necessity leading to mistaken claims to have knowledge of the existence of God as an unconditionally necessary being. In a passage whose mood might be that of a contemporary existentialist Kant writes:

> That unconditioned necessity, which we require as the last support of all things, is the true abyss of human reason We cannot put off the thought, nor can we support it, that a Being, which we represent to ourselves as the highest among possible beings, should say to himself, I am from eternity to eternity, there is nothing beside me, except that which is something through my will, —— *but whence am I*?[6]

Let me present an overview, therefore, of the way in which my account supplements that of Nagel. Nagel gives insufficient attention to the question why a sense of human absurdity should be so deeply disturbing to great writers like Tolstoi, the author of *Ecclesiastes*, and Beckett and indeed to all thoughtful persons. On his account, there was no reason for absurdity to matter since the somewhat exotic nebula's-eye perspective from which we may view our ultimate concerns discloses no reasons or standards, On my account, on the other hand, human absurdity may matter very much to us if we proceed from the perspective from which we ordinarily make action guiding judgements. This perspective, if entirely clearheaded and rational, would agree with Nagel in perceiving our human situation as one in which the justification for our ultimate judgments simply is limited, conditional, and arbitrary and in which no further standards are disclosed to which we appeal. But we are not possessed of such godlike clearheadedness and rationality. Instead, our action guiding judgments are made from the ordinary here and now perspective from which, though capable of recognizing our human limitations, we are torn by irrational propensities to seek for more than is available to us. Thus, although considered judgments concerning our human limitations will act as a constraint upon our wayward propensities and beliefs, it is unlikely that they will ever suppress entirely those tendencies to frame spurious ideals, so well described by Kant, which lead

us to be concerned, however irrationally, with the absurdity and meaninglessness of life. Unhappily, such irrational concerns are greatly magnified by the fact that they tend to operate in conjunction with various neurotic states characterized by anxiety, perfectionism, and abculia as well as with the agonies that attend the making of hard or tragic choices. Hence, they may lead to a great deal of serious conflict in the character and conduct of most thoughtful persons.

Such irrational concerns with the absurdity and meaninglessness of life may find their most extreme expression in a kind of pessimism. Among the many kinds of pessimism which might be distinguished, we need to single out two for close examination The first and more usual is the kind of pessimism which maintains that the unhappiness, pain, and evil in the world overbalance the happiness, pleasure, and good that it affords. A second and more metaphysically inclined pessimism maintains that life is essentially evil, meaningless, or lacking in ultimate worth. It is the latter kind of pessimism, then, which gives expression to the propensity to frame an ideal of justification from the vantage point of which life's oridinary concerns are condemned as lacking significance and ultimate worth. The spurious and unduly stringent character of this ideal will become apparent if we trace the consequences for our actions of adopting the latter kind of pessimism. It is generally agreed that one of the essential functions of our evaluative and moral judgements is to be action guiding. Now the ordinary judgements made by the first kind of pessimist concerning the balance between life's values and disvalues are quite capable of guiding action. Such a pessimist might proceed, with scorn and defiance of the horrors of life, to salvage as much worth as possible. Or he might commit suicide. The metaphysical kind of pessimist, on the other hand, is convinced that our ordinary judgments are undercut by the requirements of his extremely demanding ideal of justification. However, since upon examination his ideal is empty and impossible to attain, the judgements made by this kind of pessimist are utterly incapable of guiding action. In fact, he cannot even commit suicide. Let us suppose that a pessimist of the second kind judges that life is not worth living and that he ought to commit suicide. But now his judgement, like all human judgements, must also be recognized as limited and arbitrary, since upon close examination his ideal of unlimited justification must always be found to be empty and no reasons are ever disclosed beyond those which we in fact employ to support our ultimate principles. Thus if he persists in trying to make judgents according to his vacuous ideal, he will not be able to carry out his decision to commit suicide or indeed to carry out any decision whatsoever, but will instead suffer from complete paralysis of the will. Whereas our ordinary judgements may guide our actions, those made according to the standards of this kind of pessimist do not.

In short, therefore, although we may agree with Nagel that, ultimately, the only appropriate response to a perception of the absurdity and meaninglessness of life is irony, we must recognize, nevertheless, that since our natures are less than ideally rational, we are likely to be more or less disturbed by such a perception.

I turn now to the second part of my paper in which the foregoing materials are applied to Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*. I want to argue that the content of these plays may be rendered intelligible in the light of what I referred to above as a kind of metaphysical pessimism, the kind which maintains that life is essentially evil, meaningless or lacking in ultimate worth and which, in doing so, gives expression to ideals which are quite spurious. Needless to say, to take metaphysical pessimism as central to these plays is not to attribute such a view to Beckett. Beckett is not treating philosophical materials by explicit statements which *say* something about philosophical issues, but is treating such materials through *showing* something of the perspective of the metaphysical pessimist and of the way such a perspective affects persons and their actions.

In order to show how these plays may be rendered intelligible in the light of the framework of questions raised by metaphysical pessimism, I propose to single out for discussion three main issues: (1) the kind of ideal of meaningfulness which is presented; (2) how the characters and action relate to metaphysical pessimism; (3) the appropriateness of the literary structure.

We noted earlier that metaphysical pessimism gives expression to a propensity to frame a spurious, unduly strict ideal of explanation and justification. Turning now to *Waiting for Godot*, we find that this play shows to a remarkable extent just what this kind of propensity and this kind of ideal would be like. It seems obvious that Godot is a being who might provide a larger, transcendent purpose for the lives of the two main characters and that waiting for this being is their overriding purpose. But this ideal being is depicted, as was the case with the spurious ideal being is depicted, as was the case with the spurious ideal exhibited by pessimism, in terms which are utterly vague and almost devoid of content. The place and date of the appointment with Godot are vague. Little or no content is given to the notion of whom or what they are waiting for. Nor is there the slightest indication how the larger purpose which Godot might be expected to serve could ever be such as to be understood by the characters themselves and to be such as to make their lives meaningful to them.

Because Lucky's speech might well be regarded as an exhibition of the kind of spurious, incoherent ideal which is under consideration, it deserves to be treated as central to the play. Here, then, is what the metaphysical pessimist's propensity to impose unduly stringent ideals of meaningfulness and justification

really amounts to. Here, Kant might say, is what comes of those attempts to appeal to unduly strong senses of explanation and justification which take the form of the traditional arguments for the existence of God and which are known as the Cosmological, Teleological and Ontological Arguments. Here, Nagel might say, is what comes of giving undue importance to the perception of the meaninglessness and absurdity of ilfe.

Lucky's speech exhibits a progressive deterioration into the utterly incoherent. But behind the babbling incoherence one can discern the out line of an argument which, like the meaning of life question with which we have been concerned, addresses the problem of the nature of the transcendent ideals which we frame as related to our ordinary human concerns and the limitations of our knowledge. The literal content lurking behind what is sometimes incoherent is something like the followirg. Given the existence of a loving personal God it is nevertheless established beyond doubt that in spite of sports, science, and medicine man wastes and pines. The phrase "for reasons unknown" forms an obsessive accompaniment to what is said to be established. The "quaquaqua" sounds like a parody of the constant harping of the scholastic philosophers on the notion of man *qua* man as opposed to man *qua* carpenter, and so on. Appropriately, the four characters react to Lucky's tirade with protestations and agitated groaning. Pozzo describes Lucky as having acquainted him with the ideal, transcendent world of beautiful things. "But for him", says Pozzo, "all my thoughts, all my feelings, would have been of common things".[7] The name Lucky, one may surely suggest, is highly ironic.

Even minor episodes of the play may be viewed as consistent with this central importance of a spurious, incoherent ideal. For example, Didi and Gogo argue about the disagreement which occurs in accounts given by the four evangelists. One evangelist writes of a thief being saved, two of the other evangelists don't mention any thieves at all, and the fourth says that both thieves abused the Saviour. This is an instance, therefore, of the incoherence and conflict that characterizes those ultimate ideals which are to provide a purpose for life.

Turning to *Endgame*, we find again that much that is central to this play may be viewed in the light of issues raised by metaphysical pessimism and the expression it gives to our propensity to frame unduly stringent ideals of explanation and justification. But whereas in *Waiting for Godot* the main characters continue to wait hopefully for an ideal event, however vague or incoherent, to occur, in *Endgame* there is the crushing sense that without a larger transcendent ideal there is no meaning or purpose to life together with the perception that no such ideal is forthcoming. The result, as in the case of metaphysical pessimism. is that all

of our ordinary purposes are undercut and of no significance. The characters, appropriately, submit to an "old endgame lost of old." The natural world is depicted as "corpsed." Thermometers stand at zero. Whereas the Biblical creation myth in *Genesis* depicts God as seeing that His creation was good, *Endgame* presents an inversion of these materials in its depiction of, and sometimes even recommendation of, the extinction of life. Clov pours insecticide on the flea in his trousers lest, as Hamm says, "humanity might start from this all over again." And towards the end of the play, Clov takes a last look at the world and says: "Nothing ..... nothing good nothing goo---Bad luck to it!"[8] Everywhere in the play are shards of what had meaning---old stories of Lake Como, discared toy dogs, etc. Also, just as the metaphysical pessimist tends to argue that the various purposes *in* life can never add up to a worthwhile purpose *of* life, so Hamm complains: "Moment upon moment, pattering down, like the millet grains of (*he hesitates*) .. that old Greek, and all life long you wait for that to mount up to a life."[9]

We have begun by discussing how both plays may be considered in the light of the kind of stringent ideals required by metaphysical pessimism. We may proceed next to consider in detail how the characters and action may be viewed in this framework. Earlier, it was argued that if our ordinary concerns and our action guiding judgments are made to depend logically upon the kind of spurious and stringent ideals of justification defended by the metaphysical pessimist, then such concerns and judgments will be undercut and, in the extreme, we will be incapable of acting. This is precisely the state of affairs depicted in *Waiting for Godot*. The characters are made to depict what are only minimally persons. Understandably, therefore, their actions are only minimally actions. The notion of personhood includes being conscious of oneself as an agent who is capable of framing policies and assessing his achievements in terms of them. The two main characters in *Waiting for Godot* are chronically indecisive, incapable of more than fairly trivial actions, and incapable, as we found real metaphysical pessimists to be even of carrying out plans to commit suicide. Each act ends with the injuction "let's go" followed by the stage direction "*They do not move.*" As to the rights which are characteristic of persons, Vladimir says: "We got rid of them."[10]

One of the most notable facts concerning the characters is that they suffer from forgetfulness and general disorientation. They cannot connect the ill-remembered past with what is presently at hand. They are unable to recognize places they have been or even to identify boots as their own. That the main characters should be troubled by forgetfulness might be attributed simply to their having faulty memories. One critic, A. Alvarez, comments that Estragon "behaves more or less as though suffering brain damage."[11] A more interesting possibility is to

view the forgetfulness and disorientation of the characters as relating to the perspective of metaphysical pessimism. The latter perspective is characterized by its unduly stringent ideals of justification and explanation. Thus the forgetfulness and disorientation of the characters may be seen to result from the doubt which is cast by metaphysical pessimism upon our ordinary standards governing the evidence gained from memory. Further, scepticism about memory tends to be indistinguishable from scepticism about knowledge in general. All of this is well illustrated by *Waiting for Godot.* When one of the characters is pressed regarding his knowledge of some past event, his anxiety results, not so much from a mere loss of memory, as from an ultimate doubt regarding the trustworthiness of the evidence gained from memory and, indeed, regarding what he knows in general. When pressed, the judgments of such a character tend to pass from assertions to expressions of opinion and from expressions of opinion to consternation. At one point Vladimir, under ceaseless questioning, says of their appointment with Godot: "He said Saturday." After a pause he adds: "I think." But, being questioned again, he resumes, fumbling in his pockets and saying: "I must have made a note of it."As he says angrily in response to the relentless questions and doubts expressed by Estragon, "nothing is certain when you're about."[12]

Critics have expressed a very great variety of conflicting opinions as to the interpretation of the characters Lucky and Pozzo and of their relationship to Didi and Gogo. They seem unlike Didi and Gogo in that they are not waiting for and have no appointment with Godot. However, what concerns them may be viewed profitably from the general framework I have been discussing. Many of the audience are likely to remember Pozzo's lines as being among the highlights of the play when he says: "They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more."[13] What is the point of birth,"asks the metaphysical pessimist, "if we must, all too soon, die ?" Again, as noted earlier, Lucky's speech is absolutely central to the play in that it exhibits what is at the heart of the spurious ideals of the metaphysical pessimist.

In *Endgame,* as we have noted, all hope and expectation are extinguished. In this case a strict metaphysical pessimism would imply that we could no longer function as persons who are capable of acting, of relying to some degree on our memories, and of making claims to knowledge. However, plays cannot be made out of the stuff of total paralysis of the will and intellect. What does occur is that whereas in *Waiting for Godot* Didi and Gogo are depicted as at least minimally persons, in *Endgame* the characters often appear to be just characters or players in a chess game. To Clov's question "What is to keep me here?" Hamm answers; "The dialogue"[14]

The characters in *Endgame* spend a good deal of time telling stories all of which are remarkably illustrative of the framework of metaphysical pessimism which we have been considering. The first of these stories is that which is told by Nagg about the man who goes to his tailor to have a pair of striped trousers made. Angered by continued delays, the customer complains that God after all made the world in six days whereas the tailor has not completed the trousers in three months. The tailor answers, scandalized: "But my dear Sir, my dear Sir, look—(*disdainful gesture, disgustedly*--at the world--(*pause*) and look—(*loving gesture, proudly*)—at my TROUSERS !"[15] In a play which obviously has much to do with meaning of life questions, this story suggests that ours is a world which is imperfect and lacking in design and hence that any teleological argument for the existence of God as a supreme designer is unsound. This story fits perfectly, therefore, with the notion that the metaphysical pessimist requires spurious ideals which transcend our human limitations. The second story—which needs no comment— is that told by Hamm about the madman who, being confronted with a lovely landscape, sees only ashes. To which Hamm adds that the case was not so unusual [16]

Finally, we come to Hamm's long story about the father who, on Christmas eve, comes to Hamm to beg food for his child. But instead of the usual Christmas stories about good will towards men. Hamm's story, like metaphysical pessimism, argues the pointlessness even of such basic human concerns as the feeding of a starving child. Hamm exclaims to the father: "you ought to know what the earth is like, nowadays." And, Hamm adds: "Oh, I put him before his responsibilities."[17]

In the foregoing sections, we have seen how the materials of *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* are capable of being rendered intelligible if seen within the framework of issues raised by metaphysical pessimism. Let us proceed next to an examination of the relationship of the literary structure of these plays to this framework. We might begin by recalling Nagel's claim that the appropriate responsive attitude for us to take towards our perception of the absurdity and meaninglessness of life is irony, an appreciative attitude in which we view with some detachment the incongruity between our serious concerns and our human limitations. In the light of the philosophical analysis given by Nagel, it is remarkably appropriate to find that although the materials of the plays under consideration explore the perspective of a metaphysical pessimism in which life is seen as worthless and absurd, Beckett's literary structure is ironic and his treatment of these materials is often characterized by the playfulness of a vaudeville routine. In this respect Beckett's plays are in marked contrast to those of a writer like Sartre whose portrayals of the absurdity and meaninglessness of life are presented in a correspondingly serious literary structure. Further comparisons between Nagel and Beckett suggest themselves.

Nagel argues convincingly that the perception of the absurd, although a most interesting part of our human makeup, should not lead us to immolate ourselves in this perception--as the metaphysical pessimists tend to do--to the exclusion of our ordinary serious concerns. Similarly, since metaphysical pessimism involves spurious standards and is quite untenable, we may insist that *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* should be read, not as glorifying the superior truth of perspectives from which we see life as meaningless and absurd, but as expressing a responsive attitude of irony towards the meaninglessness and absurdity of life.

Our coming to the above conclusion supports the overview, therefore, that *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* through the magic of Beckett's theater, explore a large number of the issues which arise within the conceptual framework of recent discussions of the meaning of life question.

Notes and References

1. Samuel Beckett, *Endgame* (Grove Press, 1958), p.33.
2. Eugene Webb, *The Plays of Samuel Beckett* (University of Washington Press, 1972) p. 132.
3. *See* Paul Edwards, "The Meaning and Value of life", *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, vol. 4 (The Macmillan Company, 1967), pp. 467-76; Thomas Nagel, "The Absurd," *Jurnal of Philosophy*, 68 (1971), pp 716-27; Kurt Baier, *The Meaning of Life.* (Canberra, 1957).
4. Nagel, "The Absurd," p. 727.
5. *See* Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, especially Book II, Chapter III of the Transcendental Dialectic, which is entitled "The Ideal of Pure Reason.'
6. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. F. Max Muller, second edition, revised (The Macmillan Company, 1949), p 493.
7. Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (Grove Press, 1954), p.22
8. Beckett. *Endgame*, p. 78.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
10. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, p. 13.
11. A. Alvarez, *Samuel Beckett* (Viking Press, 1973), p.78
12. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, p. 10.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
14. Beckett, *Endgame*, p.58.
15. *Ibid.*, p.23.
16. *Ibid.*, p.44.
17. *Ibid.*, p.83.

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Bakhtin and Heidegger on Word and Being

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Mikhail Bakhtin and Martin Heidegger are two of the twentieth century's most influential thinkers in the philosophy of language, particularly with respect to the ontology of language or the relation between Word and Being. Heidegger, for instance, is famous for his statement that "language is the house of Being,"[1] and in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* Bakhtin argues that "an overwhelming part of reality is contained in the form of a still 'latent, unuttered future Word.' "[2] Much more than Heidegger, however, Bakhtin emphasizes the importance of the interaction between speaker and listener in his approach to the Word or discourse. His concern lies with the event of the Word--both uttered and unuttered---while Heidegger's thinking generally addresses the metaphysics of language and the notion of Being Both thinkers, nevertheless, subscribe to the idea that any sense of being or reality we may generate issues not from observation but from articulation. As we shall see in this essay, a comparison of Bakhtin and Heidegger reveals that Word and Being reside neither "in here" nor "out there," neither in the mouth of the speaker nor in the mind of the listener, but *in between.* To create this "between is to creat a space for human being, and it is the fundamental task which confronts every living I who stands before a living Thou. Let us consider, then, what underlies the task, what it entails, and what is at stake.

The Word and The Between

Where does the Word come from? It emerges from the Between, from what

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Heidegger calls *das Zwischen*.[3] And the Between, in turn, arises from the Word: one goes with the other, just as the mountain goes with the valley. Says Voloshinov/Bakhtin in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, the Word "is precisely a 'product' of the 'interrelation between speaker and listener"[4] ---not a product of speaker and listener, be it noted, but of the interrelation *between*. Speaker and listener stand at the poles, and they are indeed indispensable to the event of the Word. But the Word itself rises up in the polarity, in the passion, between an I and a Thou. Heidegger claims that the passion from which the Word is born is gratitude, which he defines as "the echo of the kindness of Being."[5] The thanksgiving which may form the wellspring of the Word, however, is a gratitude not only for blessing but for trial, if it is indeed an echo of Being. And trial occurs wherever there is an encounter with what is alien or other. The other is the one who brings us to the edge and situates us at the pole, drawing us into the tension between the poles.

It is in this connection that we hear Bakhtin declare, "The word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word."[6] And: Discourse lives, as it were, on the boundary between its own context and another, alien, context. . . . Dialogic interaction becomes, as it were, an event of discourse itself" (*Dialogic*, p. 284). The Word is an event which occurs at the threshold of relation; the Word is forever at the threshold, not what is uttered but what is about to be uttered, pulsating between *was* and *yet to be*. Conceived as discourse (a concept included in the Russian *slovo*), the Word is a portal through which we pass to encounter the other and ourselves in a space between both. Recall what Heidegger notes in *Being and Time*: "In accordance with its spatiality, Dasein is never in the first instance Here but is rather *There*, from out of which it returns to its Here" (pp. 107-108). The *There* Heidegger refers to must be understood as the between; Dasein--being there--means being between. Each I, every Thou, arrives at his Here by way of a discourse that is between; the Between is the realm of discourse. The movement from the Between to Here is what Heidegger has in mind when he says, "We not only speak *the* language, we speak *out of it*" (Unterwegs, p. 254). And we are able to speak out of language because what we are is never settled, and something of what we have to say is always yet to be said.

One way of thinking about the relation of the Word to the between is to say that the tie which binds them is the *yet to be*. "Forming itself in an atmosphere of the already spoken," Bakhtin writes, "the word is at the same time determined by that which has not been said but which is needed" (*Dialogic*, p. 280). This brings us to an important relation between silence and the Word, for it is in silence that

what is needful is revealed. Silence is the vessel of the yet to be. The notion of prayer may shed some light on this point. Prayer is the language of silence and the substance of language. In the silence of prayer we live in relation to the Word, to the enternal Thou, to the call of being. In the silence af prayer we encounter the silence of the Between, where the Word dwells as "that which has not been said but which is needed," as that which constitutes the call of Being. To be sure, Heidegger has asserted that " the call speaks in the uncanny mode of *silence*" (*Sein,* p. 277). This silent summons of Being is what vibrates in the polarity of the yet to be between speaker and listener. The Word, moreover, is born from that polarity *between* not only as summons but as response. Hence we find Heidegger declaring, "Man speaks insofar as he responds to language. This responding is a hearing. It hears insofar as it listens to the summons of silence" (*Unterwegs*, pp. 32--33).

Bakhtin adds to the light which Heidegger sheds by pointing out that every utterance of discourse is an active response and not an isolated assertion. "Every speaker is himself a respondent," he writes in "The Problem of Verabal Genres." For he is not the first to speak, not the first to breach the eternal silence of the universe."[7] Further, "the perception and understanding of the meaning of speech simultaneously assume an active, responsive position in relation to speech (fully or partially), filling it out . . . Every understanding of living speech, of living expression, bears an actively responsive character" (*Estetika*, p. 246). Coupling Bakhtin with Heidegger, we see more clearly that the Word is the means by which we not only speak but also hear and understand. Because speaking and hearing are both responsive, they do not take place strictly at the poles of listener and speaker but occur in the between, in the event of dialogical interaction. All understanding is dialogical," we read in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language.* "Understanding seeks a "counter-word to the speaker's word" (p. 104). In the act of speaking and hearing, I am displaced, lunched into the Between, where I encounter the silence of the yet to be.

Here it should be emphasized that in dialogue not only the listener but the speaker seeks a counter-word or a response to his own word. As Bakhtin expreses it in "The Problem of Verbal Genres," "the speaker himself is situated in precisely such an actively responsive understanding; he awaits not a passive understanding. . . but a response" (*Estetika*, p. 247). Every word calls for a reply, and the call of a given word issues from the Between, from the atmosphere of discourse, standing and outstanding, from which both speaker and listener draw their breath, their presence, and their consciousness. Living consciousness is responsive consciousness, and human presence is presence in the

dialogical Word. "A man never coincides with himself, "Bakhtin writes in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. "The genuine life of the personality takes place at the point of non-coincidence between a man and himself. . . The genuine life of the personality is made available only through a 'dialogic' penetration of that personality, (p. 59) In the genuine life of the personality, Within and Between are synonyms. Seeking a response, speaker and listener both seek themselves as one who is in situation, engaged in dialogical interaction. In doing so, they struggle to answer the summons which comes from the Between and which puts to them the question put to the first man: where are you? And the needful response is not so much "here" as "between."

Where I am is what I mean. My ability to respond to the question is my ability to offer meaning. In his "Notes from 1970-1971" Bakhtin observes that meaning is a response to a question (*Estetika*, p. 350). What we encounter in the Between is the question. The word makes itself heard as a question; if every word seeks a reply, it is because every word harbors a question, and this is what gives discourse meaning Hence it is possible to organize a game in which respondents must provide the question which goes with a given assertion and gives it meaning. What we say and hear, then, is sense, not sound. "In fact," Voloshinov/Bakhtin declares, "we never pronounce or hear the word; rather, we hear truth or lie, good or evil, important or unimportant, pleasant or unpleasant, and so on" (*Marxism*, p. 71). In this regard, however, we must bear in mind one other statement from *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*: "Meaning is not in the word or in the soul of the speaker or in the soul of the listener. Meaning is the effect of the interaction between speaker and listener within the material of a given sound complex" (p 104). The term *material*, however, may be misleading. "For the word is not a material thing, Bakhtin points out in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, but rather the eternally mobile, eternally fickle medium of dialogic interaction. It never gravitates towards a single consciousness or a single voice. The life of the word is contained in its transfer from one mouth to another, from one context to another, context" (p. 202),

The life of the word is the life of meaning, and meaning is the life of life, the being and reality of life's attachment to life. Where does that reality, that being, reside? Heidegger offers a suggestion: "Being, as itself, spans its own province which is marked off (*temnein, tempus*) by Being's being present in the word. Language is the precinct (*templum*), that is, the house of Being."[8] Note the phrase "Being *spans*." Being, like the Word, *between*; present is in the Word Being is present in the Between.

Being and the Between

In order to help clarify a complex notion, let us begin this portion of the

essay by identifying four facets of Being to be considered here: reality, existence, idea, and resolve. If it seems that Bakhtin's thinking dominated the first part of this essay, in this section concepts from Heidegger will prove more useful, especially when they are linked to Bakhtin.

In *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* Voloshinov/Bakhtin argues that the reality of the word resides between individuals (p. 19), & reality is precisely the reality of the word. Or better: the reality which is, born of the word. As Heidegger expresses it,"where the word fails thing"there is no (*Unterwegs* p.163).In the beginning is the Word : first we have the world of words, and then the world of things falls into place. Yet at the same time it must be said that in the beginning is the Between, for the world of words and its concurrent reality are, again, between speaker and listener. But before we go on. we should recall a point which Bakhtin makes in his book on Dostoevsky. Quoting Dostoevsky, he writes, "Reality in its entirety is not to be exahausted by what is immediately at hand, for an overwhelming part of this reality is contained in the form of a still *latent, unuttered future Word*" (p. 90). And the realm of the future word is the silent but eloquent Between. Because every word calls for a reply. reality is that which is forever unfinished; it lies not only in what is uttered but in what is forever on the thereshold of utterance.

If silence speaks, it bespeaks a reality. And if the word frames a reality, silence opens up an unbounded reality. A distinction is called for here: reality framed is the world, while open and unbounded reality is Being. In this sense, Being is what Heidegger refers to as the Open. But if, as he asserts, "language alone brings what is, as something that is, into the Open" (*Poetry*, p. 73), so too does silence as unuttered discourse; silence becomes a mode of speaking (cf. Heidegger, *Sein*, p. 165). It must also be noted that, contrary to what may seem to be the case at first glance, the Open--infinite and unbounded--is the Between; that which is limited lies in the speaker and in the listener. The infinity of Being, of uttered and yet-to-be-uttered reality, teems in the Between. What Heidegger says in his book on "Holderlin is true: "Only where language is, is there world."[9] for only where language is, is their silence between two, an unbounded space where the world of reality justs up. This action of jutting up is what Heidegger means when he says, "The world never 'is'; it 'worlds."[10]

Only where there is Dasein or "being there" is there world. Being there moreover, entails relationship within a structure, so that being there means being with. Two points should be noted in this connection: first, Dasein, or the living individual, encounters the reality of himself by way of relationship within a structure; second, his relationship within the structure turns on the word, on a

process of speaking and response. Thus we hear Heidegger saying, "Speech is a constitutive feature of Dasein's existence as an existential condition for the disclosure of dasein" (*Sein*, p. 161). For the living individual, being there means having a voice; his existence is the existence of his voice as a response to another voice.The thing he is with, then, is another voice And so, Bakhtin declares, ,'two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence" (*Dostoevsky*, p. 252). Where there is Being, there are two voices. The existence of one voice rests on a relation to the other which is to say, it rest on the Between. Where there is Being, there is the Between.

Because Being is rooted in relation, it is not something given but something generated, not something we have but something we achieve. Where the Between is lost and relation fails, we have the nothingness of isolation. This miscarriage occurs wherever the Thou, who is the other voice, is reduced to an It in what Heidegger terms "The saying work of the still covetous vision of things." Listen "The hard thing is to accomplish existence. The hard thing consists not only in the difficulty of forming the work of language, but in the difficulty of going over from the saying work of the still covetous vision of things, from the work of the eyes, to the 'work of the heart" [*Poetry*, p. 128]. The needful thing to accomplish is existence in a movement inward, toward the "man within the man," where we encounter the love that constitutes relation. "Only in communion," says Bakhtin, "in the interaction of one person with another, can the 'man in man' be revealed, for others as well as for one self" [*Dostoevsky*, p. 252]. Again, Between and within are synonyms. To exist is to love. For love is the stuff of Being. Void of love, we live in the void.

In the opening paragraph of this section we associated Being with idea. Here it must be said that the idea which is a dimension of Being is more a passion than a thought, more along the lines of revelation than speculation. Speculation is the "work of the eyes" cited by Heidegger above; revelation is "the work of the heart," inclined toward what there is to love. The thing revealed is the Between, out of which come the summons and response which signify the presence of the two voice of relation. Hence we find Bakhtin saying, the idea *lives* not in one person's *isolated* individual consciousness--if it remains there only, it degenerates and dies. The idea begins to live. . . only when it enters into genuine dialogic relationship with other ideas, with the ideas of *others*" [*Dostevsky*, pp. 87-88]. And, he adds,

> The idea is a *live event*, played out at the point of dialogic meeting between two or several consciousnesses. In this sense the idea is similar to the *word*, with which it is dialogically united. Like the word, the idea wants to be heard, understood, and 'answered' by other voices

> from other positions. Like the word, the idea is by nature dialogic. . . (p. 88)

The living idea of dialogic relation is not speculative but revelatory: Being is dialogical. The thing which threatens Being is isolated speculation, what Heidegger describes as "the evil and keenest danger" when he says, "The evil and thus keenest danger is thinking itself. It must think against itself, which it can only seldom do" (*Poetry*, p. 8).

What is required for thinking to think against itself, against the threat of nothingness ? Passionate resolve. This resolve is the substance of Being and the support of the Between. It is what Heidegger calls *will* when he says,

> The Being of beings is the will. The will is the selfconcentrating gathering of every *ens* unto itself. Every being, as a being, is in the will. It *is* as something willed. This should be taken as saying : that which is, is not first and only as something willed; rather, insofar as it is, it is itself in the mode of will. Only by virtue of being willed is each being that which, in its own way, does the willing in the will. (*Poetry*, pp. 100-101)

The movement of gathering myself into myself is a movement toward the Between where I hammer out my being through my power of relation. I am what I will to become, and the process of becoming which characterizes Being occurs in the Between. Conceived of as will or resolve, moreover, I am *not yet* what I am; the project of forging myself is forever incomplete, forever in question. If my thought is to think against itself, I must refuse the temptation to what Heidegger calls tranquilization (*Sein*, p, 347) or coming to a stop. Further, because I am one whose being is grounded in resolve, I am responsible for what I become or fail to become. An essential feature of my being, then, is the ability to be guilty (cf. Heidegger, *Sein*, p 297); I am guilty to the extent that I fail to achieve a dialogical presence in the Between through lack of resolve. This *lack* is nothingness, and the thing which announces it is dread. Thus we hear Heidegger saying, "Dread opens up nothingness" and "steals the Word away from us" (*Wegmarken*, p. 9).

When dread eclipses resolve, the idle talk of Das Man or the They takes over the word of the individual, so that he is no longer dwelling in the Between of Being but is languishing in the void of nothingness, no longer speaking but spoken. Here we may recall Bakhtin's remark in *The Dialogic Imagination*, where he says, "The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention" (p. 293). Where Bakhtin writes *intention* we may read *resolve*. In resolve the individual becomes the place of the Word, and the Between becomes the place of the individual : Being is achieved

when the word is spoken with one's whole being. The individual offers himself in the word he offers to another individual and thus becomes who he is. The highest example of the word spoken with one's whole being is the example invoked earlier: prayer. In prayer we gauge the Between as 'between god and man,' and "only in this Between, "Heidegger writes, "is it decided as to who man is and where his existence lies" (*Erlauterungen*, p. 43).

Hence the relation between two human beings-the relation which constitutes Being- entails a relation to a Third, through whom the measure of the Between is taken. This brings us to our third point of consideration.

The Third

In *Aesthetics of Verbal Art* Bakhtin writes, "Every dialogue proceeds as though against the background of a responsive understanding of a Third who is invisibly present, standing above all the participants in the dialogue The Third referred to here has nothing to do with mysticism or metaphysics It is a constitutive feature of the whole expression" (p. 306). The Third is the one for whom all things are possible, the infinite horizon of possibility for summons and response. As such, the Third is the unfinalized Truth which sustains the way of the dialogue and the movement in the Between. The Third is the presence that abounds in the openended Between, what Heidegger refers to as "the gods" when he asserts that "the word takes on its naming power only when the gods bring us to language" (*Erlauterungen*, p. 42). If language is the house of Being, the Third is the builder of the house.

The third is the constitutive feature of the dialogical relation generated by the word. The word, therefore, is transindividual, to use Bakhtin's term :

> The word (any sign in general) is transindividual. Everything said or expressed lies outside the 'soul' of the speaker and does not belong to him . . . The author (speaker) has his inalienable rights to the word, but his rights are also the listener's rights; his rights are the rights of those whose voices resound in the word offered by the author . . . The Word is a drama in which three characters participate (not a duet but a trio). (*Estetika*, pp. 300-301)

The speaker, again, is not Adam, not the first to disturb the silence of the universe. His every utterance is replete with a host of words within the word, with the presence of the Other who listens and summons. The Other is what Bakhtin deems the "Over-*I*" when in his "Notes from 1970-1971" he writes, "The overman, the Over-*I*—that is, the witness and judge of every man (of every *I*)—is therefore not a human being but the *Other*" (*Estetika*, p. 342). In *Being and Time* Heidegger alludes to the voice of the Third as the call of the Other when he states that "the

call comes *from* me and from *beyond* me" (p. 275) and that "the call is.....something like an *alien* voice" (p. 277). It has been suggested above that Between and Within are synonyms ; now we may go a step further—or a step back—and say that Within and Beyond are synonyms, recalling Heidegger's statement that "the midst of two is inwardness" (*Unterwegs*, p. 24). The midst is the beyond, and the beyond is the Third or the Other.

The call to Being comes from the Third ; the Third is the origin of Being and of the Word. It summons us to the presence generated by the Word, and it is an alien voice because our presence is always in question, always has to be re-established. That is why the Third is the judge, as well as the witness, of every being who says I. Thus every I stands in a relation not only to a Thou but to a Third, an eternal Thou, who dwells between I and Thou. There is no relation of an I to a Thou without the relation of the I to the Third, who addresses the I through the Thou and to whom the I responds by answering the Thou. When the relation to the Third fails, we fail to attain Being and are turned over to nothingness ; when that relation fails we lose the light of the Between and dangle in the darkness of the abyss. And when does that relation fail ? When we fail to speak with our whole being ; when we fall from dialogical relation to monological recitation, calculation, and negotiation ; when we have lost the question that moves us toward the truth and are lured into the sediment of fixed phrases and ready answers that become our tomb.

The relation to the Third constitutes the presence—the word and being—of the I by bringing the I to the threshold. This relation is an important part of Bakhtin's concern with Dostoevsky, and it leads him to see in Dostoevsky what Heidegger never brings out in the German poets. Says Bakhtin, "Dostoovsky always represents a person 'on the threshold' of a final decision, at a moment of *crisis*, at an unfinalizable—and 'unpredeterminable'—turning point for his soul" (*Dostoevsky*, p. 61). And what is the soul ? Bakhtin offers a cryptic definition in "Author and Hero" : "The soul is the spirit unrealized for itself, reflected in the loving consciousness of another person, God)" (*Estetika*, p. 98). Where Bakhtin writes "person, God" we may read "Thou, Third." In the first section of this essay we invoked the image of polarity as a metaphor for the presence which pulsates in the Between. With Bakhtin's concept of the soul and his notion of the Third, we may identify that polarity as spirit. If, as Heidegger has said, the Between is the measure gauged between God and man (*Erlauterungen*, p, 43), the thing which gauges the measure is the spirit or the love of the loving consciousness. Such a responsive consciousness of the Thou arises only when it is also consciousness of the Third.

In "Author and Hero" Bakhtin goes on to say that "the soul is the gift of my spirit to the *Other*"(p. 116) ; again, we may understand the Other to be the Third and spirit, moreover, to be love. Like love, the soul is mine only to the extent that I am able to give it to another, and I offer my soul to the Third by offering it to a Thou, to the human being before me, with whom I am gathered in the name of the Third. To be gathered with another in the name of the Third is to offer and receive the Word uttered in love and gratitude. If we recall Heidegger's assertion that the Word arises in gratitude, as the echo of the kindness or favor of Being (*Wegmarken*, p. 105), we see more clearly that this is where the Word's connection with Being unfolds. The Word is not the vessel of Being ; rather, Being rises up in the offering and receiving of the Word between I and Thou, between I and the nameless Third. The *event* of giving and receiving, of speaking and responding, is spirit ; it is the movement of a constant return into myself by way of the Third. Because my spiritual life is characterized by this movement, I am never coincident with myself. As Bakhtin expresses it in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, "a man never coincides with himself. One cannot apply to him the formula A=A" (p. 59).

In order for a man to penetrate himself, he must go through the Third or "the witness and judge of every man" (*Estetika*, p. 342). In the light of what has been said about the relation to the Third, we can see that the mediating role of the Third creates a tension between the soul and spirit. Bakhtin brings out this tension when he says, "The soul is an image of the totality of all that is truly experienced, of all that is at hand, in the soul in time ; the spirit, however, is the totality of all meaningful significance and direction in life, of all acts issuing from itself" (*Estetika*, pp. 97-98). If the Third is the witness and judge of every man, it weighs the constant disparity between the totality of all that is at hand and the totality of all meaningful significance and direction in life. Because the Third is there, the disparity is there. And because the disparity is there, "the definition given to me lies not in the categories of temporal being but in the categories of the 'not-yet-existing', in the categories of purpose and meaning, in the meaningful future, which is at odds with anything I have in the past or present. To be myself for myself means yet becoming myself (to cease becoming myself means spiritual death)" (Bakhtin, *Estetika*, p. 109). The ultimate Word between I and Thou is forever yet to be uttered, and the relation between I and the Third is forever unsettled.

At the beginning of this section the Third was described as an infinite horizon of possibility. Looking to Heidegger's remarks about the *not yet* of Dasein, we may now view the Third not only in terms of possibility but of potentiality.

Says Heidegger, "If the existence of the being of Dasein is determined and its essence partly constituted by its potentiality for being, then as long as it exists as such a potentiality Dasein must *not yet be* something" (*Sein*, p. 233). Heidegger's "potentiality for being" may be understood as Bakhtin's "all meaningful significance and direction," that is, from the position of the Third. The Third holds sway over the something which I am not yet. As long as I exist, the meaning *of* my life is in question, and the meaning *in* my life rests on the movement I make toward what I am not yet ; that is to say, the meaning in my life is grounded in my relation to the Third, which is the realm of spirit and of my spiritual life, the realm of the Between. In this relation I find my depth ; living in the spirit, to use Bakhtin's words, "I live in the depth of myself through faith and hope in the ongoing possibility of the inner miracle of a new birth" (*Estetika*, p. 112). For the potentiality of what I am not yet is the potentiality of a new a birth.

And who is the new being I am born into ? It is the Third, God, if you will. Or better : it is God as absolute love. Still better : it is the absolute expression of God's love in the God-man or the Christ. In the Christ, Bakhtin writes, "for the first time appears an infinitely profound 'I-for-myself'.....immeasurably good to the other, rendering the whole truth to the other, revealing and confirming in all its fullness the precious originality of the other" (*Estetika*, p. 51). The Christ reveals the I-for-myself which constitutes my highest potentiality for being. He is the one who summons me from his Third position to a new birth through a relation to the other, to the Thou. Hence, Bakhtin goes on to say, "that which I must be for the other is what God is for me" (p. 52). But I am never yet what I must be for the other. The truth and the word I offer are never quite whole, and I am constantly between myself and the other, myself and the Third. Once again it is from the depths of this Between that Being must be continually reaffirmed through the relation of the I to the Thou, of the I to the Third, a relation which inheres in the Word.

Conclusion

Bakhtin and Heidegger help us to see that the Between is the seat of Word and Being : it is the realm of the spirit, where Word and Being are one. The task which faces human being is to move into that realm, to respond to the summons that come from the Third, who is both within and beyond. The task which faces human being is to become whole in the relation is another which opens the way to the Between. The task is to become present in an apotheosis of presence, so that when we are called we may answer, as Abraham answered,

"Here I am," where here is *between*. And it is a matter of spiritual life or spiritual death.

How can we make sense of this? Where can we point and say, "There is the Between"? Nowhere. Or the inner somewhere, which, the intellect wants to declare, is nowhere. We cannot say the Between is in this place or that but only that it is near, closer to us than we are to ourselves, and that in the saying itself the nearness of the Between—of the spirit—is given (cf. Heidegger, *Unterwegs*, p. 219). In order to reach it, we must set out, again like Abraham, without knowing where we go, leaving behind all the calculation and fabrication we engage in whenever we attempt to create the illusion of a guarantee. In short, the movement into the Between is a movement of faith. Thus we hear Bakhtin saying, "We can live and realize ourselves neither 'with a guarantee' nor 'in a void' but only 'in faith'. Life (and consciousness) from within itself is nothing other than the realization of faith; the pure self-consciousness of life is the realization of faith (*Estetika*, pp. 126-127). In a leap, suddenly, faith takes us into the Between, where life finds its attachment to life in the wholenese of the I's relation to the Thou. For an instant eternity shows its face. Word and Being announce themselves in a single voice, in the utterance of Word and Being: I Am That I am.

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Modern and Medieval Literary Aesthetic Objects : Joyce's"A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man" and Dante's "Divina Commedia"

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A comparative study of James Joyce and Dante Alighieri's treatments of the literary object as aesthetic reveals the difference in outlook between Joyce's modern vision and Dante's medieval outlook. For Joyce, literature becomes religion and replaces it; for Dante, the highest aesthetic moment in the *Divina Commedia* occurs when he perceives the Beatific Vision in *Paradiso* 33, where literature mirrors, but does not replace, religious aesthetic experience. Literature here is mimesis – a replication of an actual contemplative experience of God. Although both writers through aesthetic experience confirm their respective value systems, for Joyce, secular values, arising from his newly discovered celebration of individualism, override traditional values associated with family, country, and religion. Dante's medieval beliefs, on the other hand, culminate in his experience of the Mystic Vision, where art, theology, and personal religious response coincide.

In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce presents Stephen Dedalus, whose religious, philosophical, cultural, social, and political values derive initially from his family and education. The novel, a *bildungsroman*, narrates the five stages of Stephen's development : 1) childhood : innocence and the growth of

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consciousness; 2) the loss of innocence, or sin : 3) conversion and devotion to religion : 4) the refusal to become a priest : and 5) the decision to become an artist. As an account of the hero's passage to adulthood, the novel moves thematically from innocence to experience (reminiscent of William Blake). Starting with his childhood recollections and the gradual growth of his awareness, Stephen loses his innocence when he gains a knowledge of evil by sinning. His adolescent sexual fantasies and experiments cause him both euphoria and guilt so that he falls from grace and the bosom of the Church. Subsequently, he reforms his errant ways after being frightened by a sermon on hell, and he experiences a conversion to spirituality, in particular, practicing devotion to Mary. After a period of religiosity, Stephen briefly considers a vocation to the priesthood, which he ultimately refuses. Afterwards, he discovers his calling to be an artist, and he fashions his life as an object of art. For Stephen, the moment of "epiphany" (when he sees the girl on the beach) is the peak aesthetic experience. This moment decides what his future will be : a call to life, to art, and to experience (Joyce 172). For Joyce, the aesthetic experience centers finally upon self development. His modern value system reinforces the celebration of the individual, divorced from family, country, and religion.

In contrast, Dante by his journey through the *Inferno,Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso* builds towards the climax of the concluding cantos when he, in heaven, beholds the resplendent Beatrice, as well as the Virgin Mary, before the final rapture of the Beatific Vision. His medieval values coalesce in the aesthetic object of the Godhead : religious, philosophic, cultural, literary, and even political values fuse in this scene (*Par.* 33).

To compare the development of literary aesthetics in the *Commedia* and *The Portrait*, one may note that certain parallels and similarities exist between Dante and Joyce, even though their work is separated by nearly eight centuries. Both writers model their heroes after themselves. Dante the pilgrim has the same name, acquaintances, relatives and experiences as his creator. Dante, for example, uses the *Commedia* as a vehicle for his revenge and self vindication by naming his sufferings in the prophetic discourse of Caccaiguida (*Par.* 17). Although the *Commedia* is fiction, it does contain a large measure of autobiography, and Dante as writer blends with Dante as protagonist at various points in the poem. Stephen, a fictionalized version of James Joyce, also resembles his maker as to family, schooling, and general experiences outlined in the book. However, in neither work can the reader wholly identify the writers with their protagonists, in spite of the temptation to do so, based on the strong autobiographical elements in each case.

Besides the autobiographical strains, both writers base their intellectual endeavors upon Thomistic philosophy and Catholic tradition. Both men possess a keen sense of self. Dante implies he is guilty of the sin of pride in *Purg.* 11, when he says Oderisi's speech "abates a great swelling in me" "e gran tumor m'appiani" (129 148-491) Stephen's Promethean pride even keeps him from offering a prayer to God : "His pride in his own sin, his loveless awe of God, told him his offence was too grievous to be atoned for..." (104). Dante offers his devotion to Beatrice Portinari. the Florentine woman who inspired him in life and in death, in *La vita nuova* and in the *Divina Commedia.* Joyce presents the reader with various portraits of real and ideal women, ranging from Mercedes, Emma, and Davin's peasant woman, to the Virgin Mary. Dante, likewise, renders homage to the Virgin Mary, as an idealized female. Both writers struggle with their political and cultural identities : Dante hurling invectives at the Florentines who barred him from his homeland, and Joyce eschewing all that is Irish, as he says of the old Irish man who symbolized his country : "I fear him. I fear his redrimmed horny eyes" (252).

While Dante was forcefully exiled from Florence by his enemies, Joyce, and his character Stephen, voluntarily left Ireland. Thus, the theme of exile looms as a significant factor in both works. For Dante, his real life exile is noted by Cacciaguida in *Par.* 17, where the latter predicts his progeny's misfortunes :

> Thou shalt leave everything loved most dearly, and
> this is the shaft which the bow of exile shoots first.
> Thou shalt prove how salt is the taste of another
> man's bread and how hard is the way up and down another
> man's stairs.
> Tu proverai si came sa di sale
> lo pane altrul, e come e duro call
> lo scendere e' l salir per l'altrui scale. (58-60 : 244-45)

In addition to the account of his actual exile, Dante creates in the *Commedia* a symbolic-mythical structure using the motifs of the Prodigal Son, Exodus, sea-voyage figures, and the lost regions of the soul-starting in *Inf.* 1. where the pilgrim finds himself in a dark wood (2:22). In this mythic world the movements and counter-movemements from innocence to sinful experience reinforce the archetypal return to the Father.

For Joyce, also, the theme of exile reflects both actual and mythic events. Stephen's revolt and exile can be understood in terms of his inability to achieve an adequate sexual and/or spiritual balance with regard to women. The

defiant "non serviam" of the hero is addressed not only to the Church, but to the female figures as well. Belief is not the central issue. If it were, Stephen would have uttered a "non credo." Instead, his pride, wounded by unsatisfactory sexual and spiritual experiences, forces himself from mother, belover, Church, and country, in search of his father, the, "old artificer," the father of the mythic Icarus.

On one level, there is a blending of elements of the Dedalus myth and of the Christian myth, and on another level, underlying these mythes, is a more primitive archetypal organization which provides a key to the complexities of Stephen's reactions to women. These various mythic strands are closely bound by controlling images and symbols : color images of red, green, and white ; mother and father symbols ; and water and rose symbols.

A brief scrutiny of the Dedalus myth in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* reveals the link between it and the Christian myth. Dedalus is a symbol of God the Father, the Creator. Icarus corresponds to Stephen, the son or Christ, who also becomes the artist-creator, redeemer and priest. Stephen, like Christ, is betrayed and crucified symbolically by Church and nation. Like Icarus, Stephen must experience the flight into exile from home and country (Anderson 268). Besides the father figure, the Christian myth furnishes the pervasive image of the mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, who represents for Stephen the spiritual principle. However, Picasso-like, the Virgin has another face-that of the whore. The tension between physical and spiritual love which exists in the *Portrait* parallels the polarity between St. Augustine and St. John, between the Whore of Babylon and the Bride of Christ (Kenner 61). The Virgin, of course, is a symbol of the Church itself, wedded to Christ, yet in Stephen's mind she assumes the figure of the double female. It is this same doubleness which pervades Stephen's relations with the opposite sex.

Besides aspects of the Dedalus and Christian myths which help to clarify Stephen's views towards woman, the Jungian mother archetype acts as a primeval substratum of the novel. Carl Jung stresses the importance of the mother figure, and identifies her with other women who may become mother figures for the son :

> The East calls it the 'Spinning Woman' – Maya, who creates illusion by her dancing. Had we not long since known it from the symbolism of dreams, this hint from the Orient would put us on the right track : the enveloping, embracing, and devouring element points unmistakably to the mother, that is, to the son's realation to the real mother, to her

image, and to the woman who is to become a mother, for him. His Eros is passive like a child's ; he hopes to be caught, sucked in, enveloped, and devoured. (654-55)

Thus the son may find in other women the image of his own mother, particularly in his love relationships. This vision of the mother figure projects itself into other areas as well. The Virgin, the Church, the university, the city, the country, Paradise and the Kingdom of God, the sea, or any still waters are all mother symbols, according to Jung. Symbols of fertility link with the mother : a spring, a deep well ; various hollow vessels, such as the baptismal font or vessel-shapped flowers like the rose ; even animals such as the cow (657).

Jung recognized the negative aspect of the mother archetype in its associations with the secret, the dark, and the terrifying. Historical examples of the dual nature of the mother are the Virgin Mary, who is not only the Lord's mother but his cross (in medieval allegories), and the Indian goddess Kali, "the terrible and loving mother ' (658). The son, then, caught up in the enveloping world of the mother, seeks to throw off her restraints and find the real world. Jung states that "the unsatisfied longing of the son for life and the world ought to be taken seriously....."because" the mother, foreseeing the danger, has carefully inculcated into him the virtues of faithfulness, devotion, loyalty, so as to protect him from the moral disruption which is the risk of every life adventure" (655). The son may escape the mother's influence by projecting a new image – that of woman – which stems from another archetype, the "anima," the male's archetype of the female. The anima functions as the seductress who draws the male into life.

An analysis of the *Portrait* reveals the workings of the mother and anima archetypes, as well as the Dedalus and Christian myths, through the structural devices of images and symbols. In particular, the color images of red, green, and white are important, as well as water and rose symbols. A recurring strand of symbolism is the water-mother device, for example. Whenever a reference is made to water either the mother image is recalled directly or through symbolism. Stephen, for instance, thinks of the cold, slimy water of the ditch into which he was thrown and then of kissing his mother :

> His mother put her lips to his cheek : her lips were soft and they whetted his cheek, and they made a tiny little noise : kiss. (7)

It appears that either the idea of water evokes mother or mother evokes water. In a feverish dream Stephen believes his mother has kissed him. Immediately, phallic imagery follows mention of his mother. 'There was a noise of curtain rings running back along the rods, of water being splashed in the basins" (120). At the end of the first chapter, he speaks of a "vague fear of

warm turf-coloured bogwater" (22). Then he equates the sound of cricket-bats with falling water : "They said : pick, pack, pock, puck : like drops of water in a fountain falling in the brimming bowl" (41). Again, the image of water falling in a bowl recurs, and "puck" sounds suspiciously like "suck."

While the mother figure is linked to water and rose imagery, often in an unpleasant way, motherhood evokes various feelings of security, sex, and disgust. However, Stephen's sensations and feelings about motherhood are not limited to his own mother, Mary Dedalus, but are also complicated by his relations to other women and the Virgin Mary. Eileen, associated in Stephen's mind with the Blessed Virgin and the spiritual principle, is Protestant, and Mrs. Riordan warns Stephen not to play with her because Protestants ridicule the litany in which the Blessed Virgin is called a "Tower of Ivory." Puzzling over this situation, Stephen realizes that Eileen's "thin cool white hands" are like "ivory ; only soft. That was the meaning of 'Tower of Ivory'....." (42). Thus, he forges a relationship between beauty, love, and spirituality ; however, both Eileen and the Blessed Virgin are unattainable, with imagery of white and cold supporting this fact.

Since Eileen is real, but unattainable, Stephen's imagination creates Mercedes, unreal, but attainable. As a dream figure suggested by *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Mercedes foreshadows a real transfiguration of love. She reflects the anima arthetype struggling to project an ideal female image :

> He wanted to meet in the real world the unsubstantial image which his soul so constantly beheld. He did not know where to seek it or how, but a premonition which led him on told him that this image would, without any overt act of his, encounter him They would be alone, surrounded by darkness and silence : and in that moment of supreme tenderness he would be transfigured. Weakness and timidity and inexperience would fall from him in that magic moment. (73)

In this encounter Stephen imagines a kind of religious ecstacy in meeting her. On the one hand, she represents the same spiritual love as does the Blessed Virgin, but on the other hand, she anticipates a sexual epiphany. Hugh Kenner's "double-woman" analogy posits Mercedes as the prostitute's opposite (61). Another critic, William York Tindall, supports this dichotomy between sex and religion by pointing out that Mercedes, who is ethereal, suggests the Virgin, yet "monstrous" thoughts blemish her (236). Stephen, troubled by adolescent sexual desires, indulges in "secret riots" and defiles innocent figures of the day, but when he turns back to Mercedes ("a softer languor"),

his frame of mind is romantic : she is spiritualized and idealized in his reveries :

> the image of Mercedes traversed the background of his memory...he remembered the sadly proud gesture of refusal which he was to make there, standing with her in the moonlit garden after years of estrangement and adventure. (99)

Mercedes, then, who exists solely as a dream-image, finally disappears as Stephen seeks reality. He turns from her to the prostitute. Preceding this experience is a religious description which again emphasizes the link between sex and religion :

> The yellow gasflames arose before his troubled vision against the vapoury sky burning as if before an altar. Before the doors and in the lighted halls groups were gathered arrayed as for some rite. (99)

Another aspect of the sex-religion connection emerges in the identification of Emma with the Blessed Virgin. When Stephen first meets Emma, her eyes address him "beneath their cowl" (69). Later when she does not meet him after his play, "pride and hope and desire like crushed herbs in his heart sent up vapours of maddening incense"(86). Incense with religious overtones turns into "horse piss" and "rotted straw" (86).

Two opposing forces war within Stephen : his youthful sexual drive versus his reverence for the Blessed Virgin. The word "foetus" carved into a desk shocks him as being the objective correlative of his emotions : it is the outer reality which corresponds to his state of mind. After his experiences with prostitutes. Stephen finds himself drawn closer to the Blessed Virgin. Superficially, a strange contradiction exists, but on a deeper level, Mary is an all-embracing archetypal mother. "The glories of Mary held his soul captive" (106). He cannot approach God the Father, yet Mary becomes for him "the refuge of sinners" [105]. Not only is she a mother figure who embodies the spiritual principle, but she is also womanhood idealized. Stephen wishes fervently to "cast sin from him" and to be her knight [105]. During the retreat he tries to unite the chivalric ideal, as knight of Mary, with his lust, and obliquely identifies Emma with the Blessed Virgin :

> The image of Emma appeared before him and under her eyes, the flood of shame rushed forth anew from his heart. If she knew to what his mind had subjected her or how his brutelike lust had torn and trampled upon her innocence : Was that boyish love ? Was that chivalry ? Was that poetry ? [115]

Finally, in an abject mood, Stephen despairs of approaching either God or Mary. ("God was too great and stern and the Blessed Virgin too pure and holy" [116I]). Therefore, he conceives of Emma as an intercessor between himself and Mary, "But he imagined that he stood near Emma in a wide land and, humbly and in tears, bent and kissed the elbow of her sleeve" [115]. And like Dante's advocate, Beatrice, "she manifests in his earthly experience the Church Triumphant of his spiritual dream" [Kenner 62].

As the scene of forgiveness fades, rain is falling on the chapel. Stephen associates the rain with forgiveness, purification, and release from sin—like the waters that covered the earth for forty days and nights when only Noah's ark was saved. Water, again, is the means of purification as the weary voice of the professor "fell like sweet rain upon his parched heart" [145]. The blending of water-rose imagery reappears as the hero's prayers ascend to heaven "from his purified heart like perfume streaming upwards from a heart of white rose [145]. Here the white rose signifies that state of grace in which Stephen now finds himself, as well as the Blessed Virgin through whom as mediatrix he is able to effect his forgiveness.

Water-rose imagery takes on other meanings besides forgiveness and purification. In sharp juxtaposition to waters of forgiveness are the waters of temptation. During the period when Stephen devotes himself to God, temptations of the flesh gradually beset him: "He seemed to feel a flood slowly advancing toward his naked feet....." [152]. The rose of purification becomes the sensual "rosesoft stuffs" that form the texture of a woman's stocking [Stephen, at this point, finds female underwear fascinating].

In yet another context, water prefigures the epiphany scene where Stephen meets the wading girl. His flesh dreads the "cold infra-human odour of the sea" [167]. The sea projects the mother archetype and symoblizes death and rebirth. Stephen must, in a mythic way, enter the waters and die to self in order to be reborn But he is repelled by cold water and must conquer his fear in order to discover the mystery of self. After the vision of Dedalus, as the tide runs out, he goes barefoot down the breakwater and wades among warn isles of sand. In contrast to the cold sea, he is baptized in warm waters. He sees before him a gazing out to sea.

> She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird...her eyes turned to him in quiet sufferance of his gaze without shame or wantonness.....—Heavenly God ! cried Stephen's soul, in an outburst of profane joy. [171]

The sacred and profane here symbolize the unity of flesh and spirit he perceives in the girl. She is a "wild angel," an anima figure who calls him "to live, to err to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life" [171]. The anima figure, like a goddess arising out of the sea, seduces him with her eyes and calls him to life, to break the bonds of the mother figure and the mother substitutes. As the seductress who draws him into life, the wading girl boldly accepts Stephen's interest, but he does nothing. The moment of epiphany falls flat because Stephen takes no action. Instead of answering the wading girl's call, Stephen lapses into sleep and dreams of a mystic rose which represents his new world :

> A world, a glimmer or a flower ? Glimmering and trembling, trembling and unflooding, a breaking light, an opening flower, it spread in endless succession to itself. breaking in full crimson, leaf by leaf and wave of light by wave of light, flooding all the heavens with its soft flushes, every flush deeper than the other. (172)

Various strains of meaning coalesce in the rose : it is the symbol of spiritual fulfillment, a Dantesque vision of heaven following the hell of the sermons and the purgatory of repentance (Tindall 235). It is a symbol of artistic creativity, like the womb of imagination : it is also a symbol of the mother archetype and the women associated with it. Moreover, this mystic rose appearing at the climactic moments in the novel provides structural link to the events preceding and following it. Reminiscent of his "swoon of sin" when he visits the prostitute (101), during the rose vision Stephen's "soul was swooning into some new world" (172). Later his langorous soul contemplates "scarlet flowers" and "roseways" (222).

After the epiphany scene in which the wading girl appears as an anima figure enticing Stephen to accept life, a momentary glimpse of his mother reveals a breakfast with fried bread and its yellow drippings associated with the "dark turf-coloured water of the bath in Clongowes" (174). Then his mother washes his neck and ears. Several meanings arise from this context : there is a prescience of Stephen's refusal to make his Easter duty and of his pride. It is Maundy Thursday, the day of the liturgy when the Bishop washes the feet of his priests in memory of Christ washing the apostles' feet. The washing of feet is an act of humility which precedes the celebration of the Eucharistic rite. Significantly, Stephen's mother takes on the role of the priest who humbles himself, yet Stephen will later refuse to make his Easter duty, even for his mother's sake. This family scene, with its distasteful picture of fried bread as analogous to the Eucharist, foreshadows Stephen's break with family, religion, and country.

The beginnings of Stephen's rebellion occur while he, as a boy, starts to question the "hollow-sounding voices" of his father and teachers, telling him his duty is to be a gentleman, a good Catholic, manly, and patriotic (83). His doubts increase as he struggles with his youthful sexual temptations and his encounters with real and imagined women. In Stephen's mind, motherhood and women figures gradually blend, reminding him of his mother, his religion, and his country. When Matt Davin, his university friend, recounts the story of a peasant women who tried to entice him, Stephen remembers other peasant women like her "as a type of her race and his own, a batlike soul waking to the consciousness of itself in darkness and secrecy and loneliness....." (183). He even identifies Emma with the peasant woman, when he calls her "a batlike soul" who leaves him to flirt with Father Moran-(221).

Disappointed in Emma, his earlier romantic scene associated with water and rose imagery is negated. In his encounter with Emma, he speaks of "rose and ardent light," "roselight," and a "roselike glow" [217]. He stares at scarlet flowers on dilapidated wallpaper and imagines a roseway leading to heaven. Co-existent with the rose descriptions is the water symbolism :

> He lay still, as if his soul lay amid cool water.....
> A spirit filled him, pure as the purest water..... (217)

And again :

> Her nakedness yielded to him...enfolded him like water with a liquid life ; and like a cloud of vapour or like waters circumfluent in space the liquid letters of speech, symbols of the elements of mystery, flowed over his brain. [223]

Even though this scene recalls the encounter with the whore and the wading girl, a note of false sentimentality creeps in. The promise of a call to life, of what might have been sexual and spiritual fulfillment in Stephen's meeting with the wading girl fades. Joyce successfully lampoons Stephen's romantic sensibility and his immature relations with Emma in an ironic passage :

> Yes, it was her body her smelt : a wild and languid smell : the tepid limbs over which his music had flowed desirously and the secret soft linen upon which her flesh distilled odour and a dew [233].

Hardly has this ecstasy been grasped by the reader when it is abruptly dissipated Stephen, feeling a louse crawling on his neck, kills it. Any romantic vision of his lovelife shatters, as well as any notion that he has actually acheived sexual or spiritual fulfillment.

The promise of the moment of epiphany when he encounters the wading girl – the moment of aesthetic rapture – fails. Ironically, even though Stephen invests this moment with the highest reach of his aesthetic imagination, the fact that he does so, and that he creates an aesthetic object of great beauty and power, results in a disparity between the ideal and the actual. When asked by the dean of studies to define "the beautiful," Stephen responds in a long discussion (which is his way of coming to grips with what an artist must understand if he is to pursue his art), concluding with a Thomistic aesthetic, when he tells Lynch :

> The radiance of which he [Aquinas] speaks is the scholastic *quiddatas*, the *whatness* of a thing...the instant wherein that suppreme quality of beauty, the clear radiance of the esthetic image, is apprehended luminously by the mind which has been arrested by its wholeness and fascinated by its harmony is the luminous silent stasis of esthetic pleasure.....(213)

The aesthetic moment serves as a revelation in which he understands his call to be an artist The inherited values of motherhood, country, religion, and the attendant morality derived from such values appear to him as 'nets" keeping his soul from being born Breaking with his past, Stephen announces he will express himself "in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use – silence, exile, and cunning" (247).

Stephen's dilemma centers on how to escape the restraints of the mother and answer the call to life, as expressed by the anima, when, in fact, he remains emotionally attached to the mother by bonds of love and loyalty. Complicating the problem is his inability to achieve satisfactory sexual or spiritual relationships with women. Eileen is unattainable and linked to the Blessed Virgin ; Mercedes, a dream figure, is unreal and unsatisfying; the whore takes care of his physical needs, but not his spiritual ones ; Emma he associates with the Blessed Virgin and the "batlike" soul of Irish women. As extensions of the all-embracing, devouring mother, these female figures alternately repel and fascinate Stephen. He begins to break free of the mother when he encounters the wading girl, who symbolizes what might be – the identification of art with sex ; the marriage of the aesthetic with the physical. As such, she projects the anima archetype and seductress trying to make the male need the call of life. Yet, Stephen, while agreeing in principle, fails to realize her call in action

At the end of the novel Stephen rejects the mother figures whom he believes have tried to devour him. His apostasy seems less a declaration of

disbelief than a denial of the mother archetype's dominion. Having said "non seriviam" to the mothers, he looks forward to exile where he hopes to find his father, Dedalus. In the final analysis, Stephen gives up family, country, and religion in his search for experience. He *is* and *must be olone*. He seems incapable of love or of achieving an intimate relationship with another person (although he comes closest, perhaps, with his friend, Cranly). Hostile to family, church and country, Ireland fails him ; his religion fails him, or does he fall country and religion ? The last lines of the novel reinforce his casting off the "nest" or values hindering him :

> Welcom, O life ! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race. (253)

While in Stephen's experience, the highest aesthetic perception is for him the moment of epiphany, when he realizes his vocation is to be an artist and to cast off the values that have burdened him, for Dante, the culminating aesthetic experience of the *Commedia* serves instead, to confirm his value system. Whereas Stephen decides to celebrate the self and its development, Dante contents himslf with submitting his will to Gods will, Clearly, Joyce's insistence upon individual self development through the negation of his hero's value structure contrasts sharply with Dante's self-fulfillment through his experience of the Beatific Vision.

Like the Prodigal Son, Dante has erred, and only through the ministry of Beatrice can he be saved. Unlike the women figures in the *Portrait* whom Stephen ultimately rejects (except the wading girl), Beatrice becomes the vehicle for the pilgrim's salvation and his return to God. Through the resplendent and apotheosized Beatrice, Dante glimpses Christ as a shining sun, allowing him to view the wonder of Beatrice's smile (Dante, *Paradiso* 23. 27-30 : 332). The journey or return to divine grace from the state of sin figures in the journey of the Prodigal Son back to his father, in the Exodus of the Israelites to the Promised Land, and in metaphors of ship and sea-voyages. The journey's purpose is the conversion of the will from the state of sin to grace, After his voyage of repentance through the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*, Dante, prior to seeing the Heavenly Rose and the Beatific Vision, must be Baptized in the river of light (*Par.* 30. 82-90). He exclaims : "O splendour of God by which I saw the high triumph of the true kingdom, give me power to tell of what I saw there !" ("O isplendor di Dio, per cu'io vidi/l'alto triumfo del regno verace,/dammi vertu a dir com'io il vidi !" [97-99 : 434-351]).

Because of the *Commedia*'s progressive insistence upon spiritual acuity, the piligrim needs to see God as a result of his particular development. He also represents the Christian's experience after death. His confession to Beatrice in *Purg.* 31 resembles the Last Judgment, when, after this final reckoning the redeemed soul will see God in His Essence. By giving his readers a preview of what the future can hold for them, his recreation of the Vision constitutes a moral lesson and acts as an incentive for his audience. Dante describes the supra-sensible by means of sensible imagery, and he defines the Infinite God as "Eternal Light" ["la luce etterna," *Par.* 33. 83 : 482-83] ; "three circles of three colours" ["tre giri de tre colori," 116-17 : 483-84] ; the likeness of Christ, the Incarnate, is "an image ritted to the circle" ["si convenne/l' imago al cerchio," 137-38 : 484-85]. Artistically' the post convinces because his account is necessarily partial and incomplete : he admits the inadequacy of words to communicate the whole of his extemporal moment.

Dante's marvolous Visions functions as the vehicle for the conjunction of human and divine, for the union of subject and object. Consequently, *Paradiso* 33 may be studied on two levels : the aesthetic and the theological. In both cases, God, the object of contemplation, is apprehended as intrinsically beautiful. It is this beauty that the soul of the pilgrim joins with in a mystical union – like the rapt synthesis of the aesthetic experiencer with a beautiful object in its full presentational immediacy (Vivas 95). In Dante's mind no disjunction exists between either the most significant form of theological of aesthetic experience. Vision and experience fuse in that unique moment fixed against the onrush of time. And what accounts for the curious power of the Vision is its meta-aesthetic quality. Furthermore, this meta-aeshetic experience lies within a work itself capable of effecting an aesthetic experience and of existing as object. Dante's experience of God, observed in its meta-aesthetic character, points outward to the reader experiencing the poem. And the *Divina Commedia* moves full circle, closing in the reader within the sphere of eternity. Since divine creativity is analogous to the human art of Dante, the very qualities which Aquinas uses to describe a beautiful object – wholeness, harmony, and brilliance – may be extended, finally, to Dante's poem as well (*Opuscula Selecta* 21).

Dante's apprehension of God is wholly attuned to Thomistic theory, for the perfection, harmony, and brilliance which Aquinas established as his criteria for a beautiful object apply to the description of the Trinity. The light or brilliance of God appears in three equal circles and three colors, perfectly proportioned and harmonious. Moreover, the Trinity manifests divine art (Foster 59). God the Father thinks of Himself and begets the Logos, His Son ;

mutual love between Father and Son breathes forth as the Holy Spirit. Thus Aquinas' definition of beauty applies to the Beatific Vision in both a theological and aesthetic sense : God is the highest good, for He is a spiritual beauty. God is a beautiful object : perfect, harmonious, and brilliant in all its parts. The Godhead, consisting of one essence and three divine persons, is an object suitable for aesthetic contemplation because in its manifestation as the Trinity, it is a divine art work.

The unique moment when Dante undergoes the Vision is a fixed point in time, when all time becomes one :

> A single moment makes for me deeper oblivion than five and twenty centuries upon the enterprise that made Neptune wonder at the shadow of the Argo. Thus my mind, all rapt, was gazing, fixed still and intent, and ever enkindled with gazing,
>
> Un punto sole m'e maggior letargo
> che venticinque secoli all 'mp ess,
> che fe Nettuno ammirar l 'ombra d' Argo.
> Cosi la mente mia, tutta sospesa,
> mirava fissa, immobile e attenta,
> e sempre di mirar faciesi accesa. [94-99 : 482-83]

Dante's apprehension of the Vision is the most significant form of aesthetic experience. As subject who is immobile, fixed, and oblivious, he sees God in His full presentational immediacy Dante's experience of God is intransitive because for a single moment a one-to-one relationship exists. The experience cannot pass beyond the object, for beyond God there is no place to go.

It is immportant that the subject converge with the object in a special relation of knowability which recognizes the attributes of wholeness, proportion, and clarity within the beautiful object. Joyce calls the moment of recognition an epiphany, when the subject not only recognizes the "whatness," or essence of the object, but in contemplating it, he is drawn into it in a momentary fusion out of time. As the Beatific Vision possesses the apotheosized Dante and he, in turn, possesses it, the purpose of the journey is fulfilled. In returning to the Divine Father, Dante must try to apply the new knowledge to his life when he resumes his role in society. His "desire and will, like a wheel that spins with even motion, were revolved by the Love that moves the sun and the other stars" [143-45 : 485]. The metaphor of the wheel suggests that his memory of the Vision will persuade him to persevere in his "new life". The Vision which is the final goal of the pilgrim's will unites him with God's will.

Joyce and Dante in their treatment of the literary aesthetic object reflect the contrast between modern and medieval outlooks. Dante expresses a medieval vision integrating art, theology and applied religion. The Beatific Vision culminates his journey as an errant Christian returning to God the Father. The aesthetic object, the Godhead, unifies his values and beliefs. Thus art and religion become one, with literature mimetically replicating the mystic experience Joyce's protagonist, Stephen Dedalus, while subscribing to a Thomistic definition of a beautiful object, rejects inherited values, discovering for himself within art, a secular substitute for religion. Like Dante, Stephen reverts to the Father, after being led by his anima, the wading girl, but in this case, the mythical Dedalus stands for the call to art and experience. Stephen chooses self development and individual values rather than the "nets" of country, family and religion. He chooses exile and isolation to pursue his vocation as an artist. While based on the scholastic definition of beauty, the literary aesthetic object, for both writers, marks the acceptance or rejection of traditional values. For Dante, the Godhead becomes the peak artistic and religious experience, arising from an integration of his beliefs ; for Joyce, the aesthetic object heralds a break with familial and patriotic values and the beginning of his lonely vocation.

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Susanne K. Langer and A poem of Blake

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I seek in this essay to understand some emphases of Susanne K. Langer's theory of poetry with special reference to her interpretation of William Blake's poem : *The Echoing Green*.[1] I have to begin with a brief outline of the theory in question, bearing in mind her view of art taken generally.

The *essential* function of a poet, according to Langer, is neither to convey information nor to evoke emotions in the reader, but to create an 'illusion' of 'virtual' life. Direct statements may well be there in a poem, but their use is here poetic : 'their directness is a means of creating a virtual experience'.[2] As for the relation of *feeling* to poetry, we may not deny it ; but it is important to see how it obtains. 'A poem always creates the symbol of a feeling, not by recalling objects which would elicit the feeling itself, but by weaving a pattern of words - words charged with meaning, and coloured by literary associations,.[3] The locus of the feeling is therefore the poem's whole form. The total piece looks as a vital experience may feel.[4] A poem, as a work of art, is always so expressive ; whether its reader gets infected with a particular feeling or not, is a quite secondary matter. How the poet may be said to create an *illusion* has also to be taken with care, The word here does not mean the seeing of something as different from what it really is. It means the projection of what is not at all there. What the poet creates is no misrepresentation of facts but an unreal fabric of incident, circumstance, character and speech which is yet of great value. It has charm and can convey a kind of knowledge which

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eludes the grasp of other symbolic forms. But the illusion is here absolute, because there is no underlying substrate. The creation is a *pure* appearance like the rainbow which is not taken to betoken any hidden reality. Nor is it an image or copy of anything. It is a *sheer* image. a pure apparition, that is, something which is for contemplation alone. It is true that at places Langer speaks of works of act as *images of* the 'forms ot feeling[5]' ; but in this context, I believe, she uses the word 'image' not in the sense of likeness or representation, but only as 'embodiment', so that her net meaning here is that art-works appear *imbued with* the 'forms' in question ; which, in turn, explains why she prefers to speak of an art-work's significance as *import* rather then as 'meaning'. By 'virtual life' we are required to understand the 'created' or imaginary contents of *life* taken in its social sense,[6] though the work itself is to be taken as 'living' like an organism, that is, as a whole in respect of the 'life'(or meaning) of which we cannot decide as to how much is contributed by the various elements (or limbs).[7] It is indeed easy for a poem to project things and happenings, people and their attitudes, – that is, the common filling of everyday life. But all this variform content is here cast in the imaginative mode or 'the mode of naive experience, in which action and feeling, sensory and moral value, causal connection and symbolic connection, are still undivorced'.[8] This is the idiom of 'immediate, personal life.' Poetry, like all other art, projects life as felt 'for our perception through sense or imagination'[9]

Such projection is beyond the way we use language commonly. The subject-predicate form distinguishes and relates. Words here occur in the before-after order, or as a succession ; and most of them have a fairly determinate, extricable meaning. How, then, can they present (in this everyday manner) the felt quality of such experiences as the selt-division of being *at once* between two opposing temptations or the *instant* radiation of being with relief on accomplishing a task long overdue ? If we speak of self-division we miss the tempting quality of the opposites faced ; and if we take care to mention the quality as well we do so as a supplement, and (so to say) loosen what is in fact intense and unified. Our everyday speech indeed cannot make us *see* the tension of a waiting or the happy suffusion of being that is one with,*and does not only follow* the release of a tension The 'inward life of human beings' is too intricate nimble and conjoint to brook presentation in the usual spread-out arrangement of words with often quite exclusive meanings.[10]

But if that is so. how can poetry which must work *through language* re-create the seamlessness of naive experience ? Langer's answer is : through scrupulous omission of irrelevant details and such a deft choice and knitting of words and other materials - say, 'metrical stresses, vowel values, rhymes, alliteration[11]

- that the 'look' of whatever content is picked for artistic treatment is at once vivified ; hence, indeed, her emphasis on *form*. The poetic form is doubtless symbolic ; and the search for a poem's import, perfectly legitimate. But in so far as the meaning of individual words is here not isolable-and because, what is more, they do not merely convey or possess, but seem impregnate with meaning - the verbal complex here may be said to non-discursive.

A question may here yet be put. Does such care in the use of language serve any particular end ? Or, does it only make for a neat reproduction of some experience from life ? Now, this is here a vital query. For it is in seeking to answer *it* that we come to see the chief emphasis of Langer's theory of art. She maintains that art is the *only* symbolic form which can seize and project the direct feel or awareness of life for our contemplation. Ordinarily, we only experience *the immediate awareness of life*, say, its appearing to be easy-paced and secure or crowded and venturesome ; we do not hold it up before the mind as an object of attention. Whether it be the feeling of finding ones way through the labyrinth of problems or the sense of well-being that may go with whatever one does on a sunny morning, or some essentially subiective experience like the passage of a reverie[12], or the way one feels quickened by the birth of a great idea[13]-experiences such as these, though direct and so very real, merely come and go ; we do not, as a rule, have the time or desire to dwell on their inner details. No one is unfamiliar with emotions like anger, sorrow, joy. They come up freely in experience. But the pressures of daily life do not let us dwell on the formal features of such states[14] - say. their build-up and decline or their seeming to choke or lighten being as they are withheld or given free vent. It is art which deepens our knowledge of such 'forms of feeling' and of the great 'vital rhythms' of life. It may not put an edge on our analytic ability, but it sure gives us richer insight.[15]

It is necessary to see what Langer means by these 'forms' and 'rhythms' before we proceed further. Some of her own relevant words may here be cited :

> "What (a work of art) expresses is human feeling The word 'feeling' must be taken here in its broadest sense, meaning eveything that can be felt, from physical sensation. pain and comfort. excitement and repose, to the most complex emotions, intellectual tensions, or the steady tones of a conscious human life."[16]

As here regarded, 'feeling' covers not only emotions that bear names-such as joy, sorrow, anger - but *any felt content*. Even a philosophical debate may be felt in a particular way, as illuminating or inane, disjointed or well-knit The

experience is here intellectual in itself but in relation to the self it is as directly known (or felt) as an itch. So, as Langer understands it, feeling is :

> "the subjective aspect of experience, the direct feeling of it - what it is like to be waking and moving, to be drowsy, slowing down, or to be sociable or to feel self-sufficient but alone ; what it feels like to pursue an elusive thought or to have a big idea."[17]

Here the important thing to bear in mind is that, according to Langer, 'feeling' is not merely the immediate or non-relational manner of experience, but whatever (or any *content*) that is felt. But what does she mean by the *forms* of feeling ? Here, again, her own words are of ready help :

> "...The forms of human feeling (are) forms of growth and attenuation, flowing and stowing, conflict and resolution ; speed, arrest, terrific excitement, or subtle activation and dreamy lapses - not joy and sorrow perhaps, but the poignancy of either and both - the greatness and brevity of everything vitally felt."[18]

But is it proper to speak of feeling (or felt experience) in this *general* way ? I here see no reason to withhold an affirmative answer. Take a parallel case. Every thought is in fact the thinking of an individual. But nobody objects when we speak of thought, quite generally, as being clear or cogent, or subtle or fuzzy. Therefore, though felt experiences do not of course float unowned, it would be improper to protest where Langer distinguishes the general features of feeling, say, its rise and fall ; or to demur in using such language with regard to disparate emotions like joy, sorrow, anger. Unluckily, however, we miss such general features of feeling. The laws or principles of *thought* take all our attention.

Indeed we need to be told that there are patterns in our felt, life and that it is no mere jumble Langer speaks of the great vital rhythms that embrace Man's whole life and are therefore different from the 'forms' like the one we marked a little earlier. There is, for instance, the basic rhythm of animal *existence* itself - 'the strain of maintaining a vital balance amid the alien and impartial chances of the world, complicated and heightened by passional desires 'such as' the intensity of spasm, rage or ecstasy'.[19] This may be called the rhythm of adaptation. A look at *life* reveals another vital rhythm. Our earthly sojourn 'has a definite beginning, ascent, turning point, descent and close ; and the close is inevitably death' [20]. The subjective regions of experience may be said to present yet another pattern of ambivalent feeling. The young feel unhappy at

the sight of infirm age ; yet there is no one who does not wish to grow up. Those who are advanced in years may look upon the young as raw, but do they not often long to return to their own youthful days ? Such dividedness can hardly be projected by means of ordinary language. The serial order of common speech cannot show two opposite feelings at once. But perhaps a poem can, by virtue of its careful inweaving of words.

I now feel enabled to discuss Langer's reading of Blake's *The Echoing Green*. She comments on it at length, and so I may cite the poem in full :

The Echoing Green

The sun does arise,
And make happy the skies ;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring ;
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around
To the bells' cheerful sound,
While our sports shall be seen
On the Echoing Green.

Old John, with white hair,
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk.
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say :
"Such, such were the joys
When we all, girls and boys
In our youth time were seen
On the Echoing Green."
Till the little ones, weary,
No more can be merry ;
The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mothers
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest,
And sport no more seen
On the darkening Green.

Now, what does this poem really mean ? What is its literary import, as against its literal meaning ? Tillyard's view is here as follows :

> "I believe that Blake in this poem is expressing an idea, an idea that has nothing in itself to do with birds, old and young folk, or village greens, and one most common in Blake's poetical works, It is the idea that there is virtue in desire gratified. Though desire is not mentoined, yet the keynote of the poem is fruition. The poem gives the sense of the perfectly grown apple that comes off at a touch of the hand. It expresses the profound peace of utterly gratified desire (The poem) is as nearly perfect an example of poetical obliquity as can be found...The abstract idea, far from being stated, has been translated into completely concrete form ; it has disappeared into apparently alien facts."[21]

Langer agrees that *fruition* is here the key idea. But she protests that the poem cannot be taken to mean the *statement* : 'there is virtue in desire satisfied' ; and that the meaning here is rather *'the feeling developed and revealed in' the poem.*[22] The statement in question may well be fixed as the meaning where Blake writes thus ;

> "Abstinence sows sand all over
> The ruddy limbs and flaming hair
> But Desire Gratified
> Plants fruits of life and beauty there.

But if, as required by Tillyard, we interpret *The Echoing Green* too similarly, we hardly do justice to *its* own details end form. We have therefore to take fruition differently. It is rather

> "the life process itself, and the direct experience of it is the profoundest harmony we can feel. This experience is what the poem creates in three short stanzas Gratified desire is only end of this experience ; the desire itself, the whole joy of beginning, freedom, strength, and then mere endurance, and finally weariness and the dark, held in one intensive view of humanity at play are all equally important in creating the symbol of *life completely lived.* The completeness is felt ; and the peculiar elan and progress of this feeling is the abstraction that the poetic form makes "[23]

Langer goes on to say that in interpreting the poem as he does, Tillyard has merely passed over the title,

> "which is an integral part of the piece. A village green is usually flat and open, the houses standing too far back to produce noticeable echoes. But Blake's use of 'echoing' is not descriptive, it is the opposite ; it

counteracts the flatness and openness of the ordinary green, and holds his image of life together as in an invisible frame. The 'echo' is really that of the repeating life-story - the old laughing at the young and recalling their own youth, the young returning to a previous generation - 'Round the laps of their mothers, many sisters and brothers' and there is another level of 'echoing' life - one form of life being typified in another : the children 'like birds in their nest,' and the aged people gathered under the oak Even the line 'Old John with white hair' achieves the interweaving of age and youth, for 'John' means 'The Young'. One can go on almost from word to word in this poem that is completely organic, and therefore able to articulate the great vital rhythms and their emotional overtones and undertones. What such a symbolic form presents cannot be expressed in literal terms. because the logic of language forbids us to conceive the pervasive ambivalence which is characteristic of human feeling."[24]

The two interpretations of the poem are clearly different. Which of them is nearer the truth ? Obviously, on answer can be given at once ? We have first to give close attention to the poem itself :

To begin with, I agree that the poem appears self-complete ('perfectly grown apple that comes off.....') and thoroughly 'organic' ; and, quite generally, that repression of (innocent) desires is wrong. But where *in the poem* do we find any hint of desire ? This is, in my view, a crucial question here. For, Langer too looks on the poem as a projection not of the mere tulfilment of desire, but of the desire itself, with some key features of its career in life. My view however is that no such reading is warranted by what one finds *in* the poem. The having of a desire is at once to look for something, and so it is always felt as a tension, in a measure. In the poem on the other hand, even where it speeks of sport, there is not the slightest suggestion of aiming at any target. The relation or adaptation here found appears as a working for the sake of a going well along with, or a willingness to receive something else (see : 'bells ring to welcome the spring.' "sing louder to the bells' cheerful sound." and "are ready for rest,") *but never as a pressing for or towards.* So I find it impossible to agree that the poem expresses the idea 'that there is virtue in *desire* gratified', or that it projects the *feeling* of desire which is (in the end) gratified. But, may not desire be here taken as the very love of life that makes us quietly *look for* the next moment instead of *trying* to achieve or secure something ? Perhaps yes ; but if we regard the fruition of desire *so taken* as the poem's keynote, almost the whole first stanza is left unconsidered. For here, in the first eight lines, the poet speaks only of the birds, bells and skies.

And yet it is these very opening lines that give us a clear clue to what *I* regard as the focus of the whole poem ; the idea of mutual accord and self-giving. The daybreak gladdens the blue[25]-with colour and light. Nor do the bells ring in a vacuum. They welcome vernal charm ; and, what is more, themselves find an echo in the birds' louder singing.

I here feel impelled to make some comments on the title, on the word 'echoing' in particular. Langer takes it to be integral to the poem. But it cannot be so if we take 'echo' as she wants us to : 'the repeating life-story - the old laughing at the young and recalling their own youth, the young returning to a previous generation'. For, upon this interpretation the content of the first eight lines is again merely left out. On the other hand, the concept I have put up as the focal one covers both human and natural referents of the poem.

Nor can I accept the insistence that 'echoing' here is *not at all* descriptive. The village green may well be flat in fact, and so may not be said to echo a sound literally. But, in respect of a field which is enlivened with rustic sport, and where the players are all young girls and boys, would it seem quite untrue to say that it resounds with their merriment ?[26] Further, an echo, we may note, is a sound which returns not only without distortion, but with deeper intensity. I see this hinted adroitly in the opening stanza :

"The birds of the bush
Sing *louder* around
To the bells' cheerful sound.',

Many other details of the poem's inner weave seem notable. The beginning and the end of sport are here no mere fringes. They seem clear termini, in part because they are made to go with the rise and descent of the sun, *both alike emphasized.* If there is nothing indefinite about the poem,[27] it is partly because its details are in general so conjuined, But what I here find admirable, because it is subtle, is the singular use of a device to vivify details. It relates to what the poem is expressly about : 'our sports'. There is no mention of their kind or particulars In this respect Goldsmith's poem, *The Deserted Village,* is much more elcquent :

"And many a gambol frolicked O'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round ;
And still as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the youthful band inspired."[28]

Yet, I doubt if such an obtrusive mention impresses the reader's mind more powerfully with the thought of sports than Blake's wilful omission of their

details. The way he projects what sets the stage for sports, so to say - and also what comes in their wake - is so clear that the reader is direetly enabled to visualize what intervenes, that is, the cheer and ebullience of the play itself, if not its details. This is, in my view, a better way to see 'obliquity' in *The Echoing Green* than the one which Tillyard chooses and which makes the literal details - the 'birds, old and young folk, or village greens - virtually irelevant to poetic meaning [29]

Both Tillyard and Langer, I fear, are a bit too impatient to look for deeper meanings. Why *I* do not see any hint of desire in the poem has been already brought out, and only the following from Langer may now be attended to :

> "What the poem creates...is the direct experience of...the life process itself (which is)...the profoundest harmony we can feel...(The poem is a) symbol of *life completely lived.* The completeness is felt ; and the peculiar elan and progress of this feeling is the abstraction that the poetic form makes...What (this poem as) a symbolic form presents cannot be expressed in literal terms...(it is) the pervasive ambivalence which is characteristic of human feeling "[30]

Now, I do not quite see what Langer could here mean by a 'life completely lived.' At no point does the poem look crowded with (virtual) events. Nor does it anywhere project a wrestle with problems. So the completeness spoken of can only be taken lengthwise, or as a sign of the unobstructed reaching of a ripe old age.[31] But *such* a life can hardly be felt as an experienee of 'profound' harmony. The poem, it is true, looks complete in itself. Nor can a careful reader here blink the hint of ambivalent feeling. It is surely easy to imagine that as they recall their own youthful joys 'the old 'folk' experience 'the primal Joy-Melancholy'.[32] But I see no *intenseness* about this invocation of the past, no sting or poignancy. It rather opens leisurely :

> "*Such, such* were the joys,
> When we all, girls and boys,
> In our youth time were seen
> On the Echoing Green."

Here, as indeed throughout the poem, the marks of punctuation are so used that they make for clear segments. There is no interfusion of details, and I am at a loss to see how, as Langer suggests, everything here could be said to be 'held in one *intensive* view of humanity at play'.[33] To me the poem is just a true projection of the 'look' (or feel) of a single typical day enlivened with the young at play in perfect accord with the village elders and nature.

Yet though I find Langer's net reading of the poem questionable, I do not reject her theory of poetry. Some of its emphases in fact appear borne out by the poem under review. But let me explain :

Statements in the poem do not merely inform ; they all alike serve to evoke an effect or atmosphere. 'The sun does arise' marks a general quickening, and 'the sun does descend' not merely announces the end of the day and sport, but is a call to return to the haven of maternal care The poem's form, I may add, is also expressive in the sense that its very 'look' projects the self-completeness of a typical day. Again, the 'events' are all 'virtual' or cast in the imaginative mode. It is indeed easy to see how the very opening words of the poem 'effect the break with the reader's (actual) environment'[54] :

The sun does arise
And make happy the skies.

In everyday life we may well be struck by what goes along with a sunrise : the upsurge of colour and light in the heavens. But we do not believe that the heavens rejoice at the dawn, or that the sun rises *with a view* to making 'happy the skies.' And in case we seek for literal truth it would be a further strain on our credence if we are told that the bells and the birds keep up their merry music '*while* (or as long as)...sports shall be seen.' The fact, however, is that the injection of a little feeling and purpose into nature is done so straightway and so kept up throughout the first stanza that the reader's passage from the actual to the poem's virtual world is quick and secure. It is true that an individual, 'Old John,' is named, and his 'white hair' distinguished But the singleness is set off at once, for John is shown as sitting...'*among* the old folk' who laugh (as one) 'at our play'[35] Indeed, the entire poem is an apparition, that is, an image for contemplation alone. There is nothing in it to impel us to check the veracity of its details with any outer fact But, though I certainly regard it, I repeat, as a powerful projection of the felt gathering of Nature and Man, so to say, around the village youth at play, I do not here see the dominance of any 'vital rhythm' or 'form of feeling '

But, if this is all that the poem 'says', how is it significant ? There is no great value in the thought that the young are playing merrily and that nature and the village elders are at one with them Here, following Langer, my answer is that the value of the poem lies not in any message that may be extracted from it, but in what it is able to create : the image of a cheery day of village sport, of how it begins, attains to its zenith, and finally ends, quite as agreeably as it opened. The reader is enabled to dwell on the cheer and the pervasive harmony ; he does not only read about them. But such a

contemplative access to what is felt is granted only to these who are able to get at the poem's total form ; only then does *it* appear to project the 'feelings' I speak of.

As we seek to unravel its form we see how the poem is organic. I have already shown how some of its elements conduce to its import. But I must add that this build-up of significance is no mere delivery of pre-fixed, independent meanings. The elements contribute what they come to acquire in the knitwork, so that the overall form must be said tobe non-discursive. Langer suggests that "the line 'Old John with white hair' achieves the inter-weaving of youth and age, for John means 'The Young'"[36]; but I wonder if the linkage in question would be so fully 'achieved' or manifest as it is without the help of the words that follow immediately ; 'Does laugh away care', and the prompt reiterative touch :

Among the old folk,
They laugh at our play

And I am sure the last line of the opening stanza :

On the *Echoing* Green

would not make much sense unless we bear in mind the joyful aspect of nature-*and its little 'virtual' acts of self-giving* - projected by the poem's very opening. But it is where the poem ends that the note of self-giving and accord rings audibly and clear :

Round the laps of their mother,
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest.

It is the gathering of a need around its true source of succour. The weary ones look for rest ; and their human nest, the mother's lap, is a ready refuge. It is easy for the reader to fill in this picture of a loving trust *returned*. What I here wish to emphasize, however, is not merely the echoing of a basic human feeling but the subtle way in which these lines bring the poem to a close by providing a foil to the opening ones. Birds singing 'around' (to the bells' cheerful sound) and the sunrise that enlivens the blue evoke images of suffusion and free happy flight, All this is reversed when we come to the following :

'Round the laps of their mothers...
like birds in their nest.

The poem does not merely and, but gathers itself into a point of repose.

Notes and References

1. The theory and the interpretation both occur in Chapter XIII of Susanne K. Langer's : *Feeling and Form*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 3rd Impression, 1963, pp. 208-235.
2. Ibid, p 228.
3. Ibid p. 230.
4,5. S. K. Langer : *Mind - An Essay on Human Feeling*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, London, Vol. I, 2nd printing P. B. 1975, p. *XIX*.
6 *Feeling and Form* p. 214.
7. S. K. Langer : *Problems of Art*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, p. 135.
8. *Feeling and Form*, p. 217
9 *Problems of Art*, p. 15.
10. Ibid, p 22.
11 *Feeling and Form*, pp. 212-13,
12. Cf. Ibid, p 218,
13. Ibid, p. 219.
14. Or rather 'feeeling's The word 'feeling'...covers more than a 'state'; for feeling is a process, and may have not only successive phases, but several simultanus developments..." Ibid. p 230.
15. Cf. Ibid, p 220.
16. *Problems of Art*, p. 15.
17. Ibid, p. 22.
11. *Eeeling and Eorm*, p 27
19. Ibid, p. 330.
20. Ibid, p: 332.
21 E. M. W. Tillyard : *Poetry, Direct and Oblique*, Chatto and Windus, London 1934, pp. 11-12.
22. *Eeeling and Eorm*, p 226.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid, pp. 226-27.
25. I am here reminded of Blake's colour print worked up with brush · *Glad Day* (1794). See Kathleen Raine's *William Blake*, The World of Art Library : Artists, Thames & Hudson, London, 1974 Reprint, facing p. 92.
26. I here feel encouraged by the thought that, according to Blake, delight is the essence of life See *William Blake*, p. 50.
27. It would here be relevant to mark Blake's penchant for definiteness in the visual arts : ' He who does not imagine in stronger and better lineaments, and in stronger and better light than his perishing mortal eye can see, does not imagine at all...Expression cannot exist without character as its stamina ; and neither character nor expression can exist without firm and determinate outline", Kathleen Raine : *William Blake*, pp. 8, 20.

28. *Feeling and Form*, p. 231.

29. Ibid, p. 225.

30. Ibid, p. 226-27. I here diverge from the order of the original, but no violence is done to Langer's meaning.

31. The reference here is to : 'Old John, with white hair'.

32. *Feeling and Form*, p. 227.

33. Ibid, p. 226. Italics added.

34. Ibid, p. 214.

35 The careful reader is bound to be struck by the free use of words suggesting collectivity. Thus, see : 'our sports shall be seen', And soon they *all* say', 'When we *all*, girls and boys', '*Our* sports have an end', and '*many* brothers and sisters'.

36. *Feeling and Form*, p. 227

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Wyatt Earp Joins The Community

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Introduction

In a 1976 essay on the visual imagery in John Ford's Westerns, Michael Budd analyzes the importance of the church dance sequence in *My Darling Clementine* for visually establishing the film's major theme of a community being created. A series of shots juxtaposes the dancers whirling around the floor of the unfinished church with Wyatt and Clementine uncomfortably looking on, until finally Wyatt summons the courage to ask her to dance and the two sets of images, in effect, merge. "Separate spaces, sounds, and forces are joined," writes Budd ; "the community finds a center."[1]

I propose to continue Budd's analysis along the same general lines but extend it much further by applying to the church dance sequence theories of visual imagery put forward by Rudolf Arnheim in his book *The Power of the Center* (1982) and in a public lecture, "Composition in the Visual Arts," delivered by Professor Arnheim at the University of Idaho on September18, 1985. Briefly put, Arnheim reduces all visual imagery to two "systems" : the cetric system and the linear or grid system. The centric system corresponds in nature to the force of gravity, pulling everything toward the center. The linear system represents resistance to gravity and to the pull of outside forces generally. Centric systems are typically manifested by circularity, linear systems by verticality.

By explaining in somewhat greater detail Arnheim's theories, and then analyzing closely the visual composition of the individual shots that comprise

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the scene in which Wyatt and Clementine watch and finally join the dance, I hope to establish that ford succeeds in depicting not merely Wyatt Earp joining the frontier community of Tombstone, but an archetypal paradigm of the founding of *all* communities.

"Downward Pull and Upward Striving"

Arnheim's theory is, to say the least, ambitious. It claims to account not cnly for the formal characteristics of works of art but for their symbolic content as well. "The interaction between the two spatial systems (centric and linear)," he writes in the Introduction to *The Power of the Center*, "generates formally the complexity of shape, color, and movement that our visual sense cherishes ; and it represents symbolically the relation between the cosmic perfection of which any thing or creature possesses a little and the struggle between downward pulll and upward striving that marks the drama of our earthly behavior."[2] Furthermore, while up until now Arnheim has applied his theory only to painting, sculpture and architecture, he believes it would also be useful in the analysis of works in other media, particularly film[3] and even in non-visual fields, such as music. He admits that this virtue of all-inclusiveness can also be a weakness : in response to a question following his public lecture at the University of Idaho he acknowledged that a theory which seems to explain everything runs the danger of explaining nothing. Nonetheless, his ideas are compelling not merely for their boldness but also for their success in deepening our understanding of the power certain kinds of images exert over us.

At the core of his theory, in more ways that one, resides the force of gravity ·

> The dominant pull of gravity makes the space we live in asymmetrical. Geometrically, there is no difference between up and down ; dynamically, the difference is fundamental. In a field of forces pervading our living space, any upward movement requires the investment of special energy, wheras downward movement can be accomplished by mere drooping, or by merely removing the support that had kept the object from being pulled downward.[4]

Allow me, at great risk of oversimplification, to severely condense the symbolic cosequences in visual art of the asymmetry of perceptual space owing to gravity Gravity draws us and all objects in our experience toward an unseen center without requiring any cooperation on our part and indeed even

against our will. Circular and spherical images thus represent the centric system which overcomes our "upward striving" – our struggle to resist gravity's "downward pull" – which is represented by vertical or grid images. Therefore verticality is for Arnheim the crucial dimension with regard to the force of gravity. But when death ends our striving we effortlessly "droop," because, while our striving is short-lived, gravity is eternal : hence the "cosmic perfection" of the centric system. Yet as long as life continues we each feel the urge to assert ourselves in our individuality against the outside forces that ultimately claim us, and this in essence constitutes "the drama of our earthly behavior."

In effect, Arnheim claims to identify a psychological phenomenon that underlies all human experience and is expressed in its purest and most abtract form through the visual arts. "It is the interaction between the two (systems)," he said at his University of Idaho lecture, "that is, psychologically speaking, the interaction between the demands of the self and the demands of outer forces which is then manifest in the corresponding visual patterns." Moreover, the most profound manifestations of that interaction in visual patterns would seem to occur in works of art with decidedly religious themes, inasmuch as there is, not surpisingly, great religious significance accruing to both centric and linear systems For example. Arnheim discusses Dieric Bouts' *Last Supper* (1468) as a painting that, when viewed as a flat composition, emphasizes the linear system but favors the centric system when perceived in three-dimensional perspective (see Figure 1). The painting allows both views because, while there are several obvious devices that suggest depth, the overall "symmetry of the projective pattern tends to flatten the scene." Viewed the latter way, the picture has an "upright format," which brings out the "hierachic dimension of verticality," dominated by the "figure of Christ, framed and enthroned by the fireplace behind him." However, when perceived three-dimensionally the painting "becomes more down-to-earth, less hierarchic." Rather than being hierarchically subordinated to Christ along the vertical, the "group is now centered around the circular plate with the lamb roast," which of course is a Christ symbol.[5] Appropriately, two aspects of divinity are expressed : that of rising above the mundane, and that of absorption into the eternal:

Psychologically, two additional, related themes emerge. The linear system, directed toward the individual figure of Christ, suggests individuality, "the demands of the self," while the centric system, centered around the general symbol of Christ (the lamb), evokes "the demands of outer forces,"

which can here be seen, in this image of communion, as the demands of a community over and even against the individual. Arnheim observes that in the perspective viewing the fireplace "no longer enshrines the figure of Christ, who sits as one man among others" and is actually ',of equal height" to Judas.[6] One might also point out, although Arnheim does not go so far, that the linear Christ and centric lamb also correspond, respectively, to masculine and feminine aspects of the two systems, with obvious affinities to the universal symbolism associated with the phallus and the womb.

The center of a composition acts as a hub, a function especially noticeable within a circular frame, as in the image on a cup from c. 480 B.C., representing Hercules and Athena which Arnheim discusses both in his book and in the public lecture (see Figure 2). In addition to serving as hub, this "balancing center" is often the site of what Arnheim calls a "microtheme", which is a "symbolic representation," usually a ' simplifying abstraction," ' that reflects and symbolizes in the small the subject of the whole work" and is thus "capable of conveying the theme with concentrated immediacy." In Figure 2 the microtheme is "the two small containers, the jug and the cup, acting out a condensed and abstracted replication of the larger subject, namely the relation between hostess and guest, dispenser and recipient."[7] Once again, it might also be said that the subject of the work, as well as the microtheme around which the whole image is centered, is a kind of communion symbol.

Arnheim also applies his theory to architecture, and his comments in the University of Idaho lecture on Bernini's plan for St. Peter's Square in Rome are worth summarizing because of their direct relevance to the visual composition of the church dance sequence in *My Darling Clementine*. (See Figure 3.) The plaza before the cathedral is comprised of "two half-circular colonnades.....in a centric way embracing the crowd which collected in the square around this center." But to incorporate just one system in the plan would be "static", and so "at the same time of course these people move towards the church and come out of the church and you have a linear movement from and to and out and over, "expressing" again the interactive of our two systems.....the tension between the compression, the concentration of the crowd in the embrace of the two colonnades and the traffic of the people coming and going from the sanctuary." Once more I would also add that the centric system represents the community ("the crowd") and perhaps femininity as well—twice Arnheim describes the colonnades as "embracing" the crowd. Similarly, the "sanctuary" toward which the linear system is directed

symbolizes the dwelling place of the one traditionally masculine Judaeo-Christian God.

Linear and Circular Interaction at the Church Dance

Even before Michael Budd's article the church dance sequence in *My Darling Clementine* had provoked much comment and admiration for its purely visual impact, aside from its dramatic (and comedic) effectiveness, its mythic flavor and so on. In 1973 Stefan Fleischer, attempting to develop a methodology for studying film based on the theories of Erwin Panofsky, used the sequence as a starting point for the investigation of "film iconography," a term which Fleischer tentatively defined by means of the proposition that "if a film means anything, it means not what it says but what it looks like." "Ford's West," determined Fleischer, "is a memorialization" that is achieved "by means of icons." For example, the American flags flying beside the church framework (Figure 4) "assume an iconographic resonance by the very fact of their doubling. Their elaboration in space suggests that they are emblematic of a dream about America, not the representation of an historical moment."

It should be readily apparent that Fleischer's observations concerning the flags can be greatly expanded by the application of Arnheim's concept of the symbolic import of verticality. Taken together with the church tower, the flags represent a spiritual striving toward the sky, which takes up most of the screen in the extreme long shots Fleischer is referring to. Indeed, the sky is visible through the unenclosed church framework, enhancing the sense of spiritual aspiration. Non-visually, the hymn on the soundtrack during the establishing shots before the dance begins increases this effect further. The church is in every respect at the center of the composition of these sequence: we see people approaching it from all directions until a crowd has gathered around it, not unlike the crowd in the "embrace" of the colonnades in Bernini's plaza. True, the space the crowd occupies is not perfectly circular; however, it is irregularly rounded, and that roundness is echoed by the hills in the distance and the curve of the horizon line and even by the white covered wagon visible just below the crossbar between the two flagpoles. The roundness of the crowd and of the landscape contrasts strikingly with the verticality and gridlike features of the church and the flags.

The pronounced linear qualities of the church and flags associate them visually with the town of Tombstone as a whole, which, as McBride and Wilmington observe, "seems to be divided into squares and planes," while the

"framing continually empasizes horizontal planes stretching into the distance (the boardwalk and the long bar)." The symbolic connection between church and town in terms of verticality is by no means obvious, although McBride and Wilmington seem to hint at it unintentionally when they describe our first view of the town (after the doomed James is left to-guard the cattle) as follows : "Tombstone, which the three surviving Earps enter beneath a turbulent El Greco sky, is like the painter's *View of Toledo*—an isolate, throbbing citadel of light nestled in a pall of chaos and darkness."[9] The town, including its church, of course implies civilization, the summation of all human efforts to transcend the limits set by nature · mortality, animality, gravity. Like El Greco's holy city Ford's Tombstone does indeed strive upward out of the darkness. Ford's city, however, like its church, is unfinished.

As is also the case with its marshal. It has often been remarked that the Henry Fonda character is civilized in the course of the film in several respects, most immediately, though, with respect to his instant dandification in the barbershop. 'This moment," comments Peter Wollen, "marks the turning-point in Wyatt Earp's transition from wandering cowboy, nomadic, savage, bent on personal revenge, unmarried, to married man, settled, civilized, the sheriff who administers the law."[10] At the beginning of the film Wyatt, like the town, needs to be cleaned up, though both man and town have a strong potential for good in them, even latent spiritual aspirations. In Wyatt's case we see this clearly from his speech at his brother's grave. With regard to the town we gradually draw a similar inference from the Mayor's efforts to hire a decent and effective law enforcer, from the people's willingness to invite and attend a performance of Shakespeare, and of course from the deacon's industry in founding a church ("Bless my soul, he did it" says the Mayor. "John Simpson said he'd have a church and he has.")[11]

The symbolic kinship, then, between Wyatt and Tombstone is evident through a correspondence in "appearance," so to speak : both move from looking unkempt and unfinished to being well on the way to maturity and refinement. But the similarity in appearance is also brought out through visual correspondences that are best understood through Arnheim's theory. Just as the town and church are defined visually in terms of lines and grids, so Wyatt is typically photographed in such a way as to accentuate his height, slenderness and upright carriage. Usually, and especially after his second visit to the Bon Ton Tonsorial Parlor he wears black, which makes his upright figure stand out even more against the dusty town and desert backdrop. In particular his tall cowboy hat, of which I will have more to say later, sums

up—literally caps—the impression of verticality. Furthermore, he is often framed in such a manner that his body complements and all but becomes incorporated into the line and grid character of the town, as when he sits on the porch keeping an eye on things (Figure 5) or as he seeks cover at the OK Corral (Figure 6).

Wyatt and the town also resemble each other in what it is they are lacking. The church tower, the town's spiritual center, is only a framework, a bare skeleton, open to the sky but unprotected against the elements. It needs to be filled in, but more to the point it needs to be filled up with people. Wyatt, too, needs to fill his life with people other than those he identifies as his own family. Until he does so, his life will remain rootless, insubstantial. His brothers are little more than subordinate manifestations of his own personality, and together they constitute a collective version of the classic Western loner. Yet for the first part of the film that seems to be the way he wants it. His only reason for restoring the peace on his first visit to Tombstone is in order that the barber can finish shaving him, which is to say that his aspirations toward cleanliness and purity are entirely inward directed. His decision to change his mind and stay on as marshal with Morgan and Virgil as deputies is mainly motivated by desire for revenge, although his explanation at his brother's grave establishes a basis for eventually opening up his spiritual resources to others : "We're 'goin' to be around here for awhile, Can't tell—maybe when we leave this country, young kids like you will be able to grow up and live safe" (p 40).

Making Tombstone safe for young kids to grow up in is unquestionably good work—it might well be regarded as part of the Lord's work, as the following bit of dialogue between Wyatt and the deacon's family corroborates early in the church dance sequence, after the Earps are invited to the "social gatherin'.....to raise enough money to finish the church : "

WYATT : Well, thank ya, ma' am, but my brothers got sort of a job of work to do and I oughta stay aound the place.

SIMPSON : Well, keepin' the peace is no whit less important. (pp. 76-77)

Although Wyatt's work is equally important, it is still not the same as actually participating in the social gathering and helping to finish the church. He is still too individualistic, too inner directed to seek admission to Tombstone's symbolic first communion. Significantly his brothers, the two remaining parts of Wyatt's collective alter ego, are going to visit the grave of the third part. However, both brothers express an eagerness to get back

quickly : Virgil wants to dance and Morgan says, "You know, there's probably a lot of nice people around here. We just ain't met 'em," This prepares us for Wyatt's definitive moment of transformation. However, our expectation has been building from the beginning of the sequence, when the Earps in three-shot, Wyatt in the center, all comment on how the procession of wagons into Tombstone reminds them of "back home on a Sunday morning," "with Ma scrubbin' our necks" (p. 75).

But the strongest, though subtlest anticipation of Wyatt's joining the community is conveyed in purely visual terms as Wyatt escorts Clementine to the gathering place. (See Figure 7.) Even more than previously, his tall, dark figure, accentuated by his high-crowned hat, reflects the vertical and linear qualities of the town. Even more significantly, in a relatively long take as they walk slowly down the street away from the camera, Wyatt verly nearly overlaps the church steeple in the exact center of the frame, so that the steeple almost becomes an extension of his spirituality, as with Christ and the fireplace in the Bouts *Last Supper*. Clementine's appearance, however, while harmonizing with his, presents a distinct contrast to it in several crucial respects. First, he is dark while she is light, both in color of clothing and in skin tone. Second, the angularity of his features point up the roundedness of hers. Literally this is the case from head to toe : even the softness of line in her eyes, mouth and chin underscores the sharpness of his eyebrows, moustache and jutting jaw. Of greatest interest, though, is the contrast in dress, particularly his tall hat compared to her low bonnet, and his stiffly cut jacket compared to her lacy shawl, with its curvy embroidered border. Undeniably much of the appeal in this scene comes from its evocation of conventional gender roles : they are, after all, dressed like bride and groom and their hymn-accompanied stroll is like a mock wedding march, or perhaps a wedding rehearsal. Yet her association with the centric system is not tangential to her association with traditional values ; on the contrary it is the most forceful, albeit also the most abstract expression of her mythic role. "The myth of the western illustrates, and both initiates and confirms woman in her role as vestal of the social virtues," writes Andre Bazin in a famous essay, which goes on to offer a metaphor that could almost be taken as a prophetic endorsement of this aspect of Arnheim's theory : "Within her is concealed the physical future, and, by way of the institution of the family to which she aspires as the root is drawn to the earth, its moral foundation."[12]

The moral foundation to which she and Wyatt are drawn is of course the literal foundation of the church. The dance begins after Simpson has "officially dedicated" the church and simultaneously pronounced a biblical

sanction for "havin' a dad-blasted good dance" (p. 82) This appropriately takes the form of a square dance, with couples taking turns spinning arm in arm about the center while the other people stand in straight rows to either side and cast long, straight shadows. The dance, then, in its essence combines the linear and centric systems. Closeups, though, tend to emhasize the centric system through slightly low-angle shots of buxom, round-faced women, while long shots from above bring out the linear prominence of church and flags. Overall, the two systems are held in a dynamic balance, as is evident even from the description in the continuity script:

> Long shot of the dancers. There are facing lines of men and women ; individual dancers meet a partner between the lines, each in turn, according to the music, and then go back to their places. The camera looks down the line of dancers, slightly angled toward the women's line.
>
> Long shot looking directly down the space between the two lines. The dancers move across the frame, circling and turning. At the far end of the space, the bottom of the steeple frame can be seen (p 83 ; italics omitted)

To reiterate Budd's phrase. the community indeed finds a center, and it pulls everyone toward it. In the original shooting script, in fact, even the Old Man Clanton is there, not to mention the town drunk, the local madam and her "ladies" (pp. 118-28, n 25)

At the heart of the sequence is the miniature drama concerning the last to join the dance, Wyatt and Clementine. Budd's description of the ordering of the images leading up to that moment is worth repeating :

> Couple and community are in separate shots ; the dance continues to build, while Wyatt and Clementine, not yet participants, are more and more attracted to it. The parallel actions culminate in the final three shots of this part. The dancers begin a movement of both lines through the center, a climactic affirmation of communal unity. Only then, in the next shot, are the town and the far-off monuments added to the church scene, all elements in the film accumulating in one synoptic image in preparation for the couple's inclusion. And so when Wyatt subsequently asks Clementine to dance and they start to join the community, the action carries a tremendous charge of assimilation and consummation [13]

Budd's recounting of the scene is already a virtual replica of the reading I would bring to bear upon it, minus the theoretical underpinnings and analytic equipment supplied by Arnheim. Rather than spell out those additions, let me instead focus even more narrowly on a minute but fascinating detail that Budd neglects.

The shots of Wyatt of Clementine which are interspersed with those of the dance are static, almost frozen in comparison to the whirling dance. This is appropriate in terms of the linear resistance Wyett is still exhibiting against the centric pull of the community. He stands tall and rigid beside the ever softer-looking Clementine, and his verticality is further enhanced by the background, which in the first three of those shots includes distant, spire-like mountains, while the last shot (just after Simpson stops the music for them) prominently features three giant cactuses. Yet these two-shots are not entirely static. As Henry Fonda's face registers more and more embarrassment and indecision, we see that Cathy Downs has begun to clap (in the second shot of the series), indicating that in a sense she is part of the dance already.

It is at this point that, in the words of the continuity script, Wyatt "takes off his hat, holds it in his hand for a moment, then tosses it away." That high-crowned hat, as I said before, is literally the apex of his verticality, the symbol of his upward striving and of resistance to the pull of outside forces. It is also an expression of his individuality : no one in the film wears a hat anything like it. Perhaps we might even think of it as his last link to the drifting cowboy life he is now figuratively discarding, as he literally "tosses away" the hat. (Actually he first gazes on it with an expression of yearning while she watches, unsure what he is about to do,) He asks her to dance and she accepts, and what happens next may again be described from the continuity script : "She takes off her shawl and gives it to Wyatt, who folds it on his arm" (p. 84 ; italics omitted.)

The business with the hat and shawl, I contend, is a microtheme : a "symbolic represention" or "simplifying abstraction" "that reflects and symbolizes in the small the subject of the whole work" and is thus "capable of conveying the theme with concentrated immediacy." In removing the hat, Wyatt's verticality makes a concession to centricity that makes it possible for him to participate in the dance of communion. He is no longer above or isolated from the people, and as he dances with Clementine (Figure 8), the couple is photographed in such a way that, with Wyatt bareheaded, they are nearly equal in height. At the same time, he is still marked out from the rest visually by maintaining his verticality through his dark suit and even by the

dance itself : he leads Clementine through a high-stepping, up and down waltz, in angular contrast to the whirling motions of the previous dancers. This is fitting, for as much as he needs to belong to a community, the community needs singular individuals like him in order that "young kids..... will be able to grow up and live safe." So the deacon calls on the crowd to "make room for our new Marshal" (p. 84), and it is also fitting that the hatless Wyatt should dance alone with his "lady fair" while upholding her frilly shawl, which flutters from his arm like one of the flags overhead from its flagpole.

Notes and References

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3. Arnheim, *Power of the Center*, pp 211, 212.
4. Arnheim, *Power of the Center*, p. 10.
5. Arnheim, *Power of the Center*, pp. 187, 189.
6. Arnheim, *Power of the Center*, p. 189.
7. Arnheim, *Power of the Center* pp 94, 120.
8. Stefan Fleischer, "A Study through Stills of *My Darling Clementine*," *Journal of Modern Literature*, 3 (1973) : 241, 251.
9. Joseph McBride and Michael Wilmington, *John Ford* [New York : Da Capo, 1975], pp 95, 93
10. Peter Wollen, "Structural Patterns in John Ford's Films," in Lyons, ed., *My Darling Clementine*, p. 171 ; originally from Peter Wollen, "The Auteur Theory," in *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* [Bloomington : Indiana Univ. Press, 1972]. Also see Fleischer, "A Study through Stills," pp. 245-47.
11. Lyons, ed., *My Darling Clementine*, Continuity Script, p. 80. Further references to the continuity script will be given in my text.

12. Andre Bazin, "The Western, or the American Film *par excellence*," in *What Is Cinema?*, trans. Hugh Gray [Berkeley : Univ. of California Press, 1971], 2 : 145. Originally published in 1953.
13. Budd, "A Home in the Wilderness," p. 166.

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Stereotypes of Homosexuality in the Fiction of Angus Wilson

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Writing about the place of the homosexual hero in fiction Stephen Adams says :

> In his own life Wilson has been willing to identify himself with the campaign for gay rights. However, his homosexual characters are never vehicles for propaganda. They are variously as comic, as pathetic, as wise, as foolish, as good and as bad - as human, in other words - as all of his other characters.[1]

Other critics - K. W. Gransden and Walter Allen, for instance[2] - have also noted this modernist inclusion of the 'homosexual' in fiction and have related it to the familiar liberal-humanist attempt to discredit Victorian and pre-modern (also oriental) attitudes towardes homosexuality.

However, if we are to relate the recent studies of sociologists towards the place of the homosexual in the Western world we find that labelling men as 'homosexuals' has alienated them from the society and given them negative self-images.[3] The public-image of the homosexual is equally negative. He is considered effeminate, abnormal and in-capable of getting married. But this distinct homosexual image has emerged only in modern Western societies and did not exist either in Classical, oriental or even pre-modern Western cultures.[4] There also seems to be evidence to suggest that the stereotype of the 'homosexual' in fact makes individuals fit into the expected role so that the image creates the role and not vice versa.[5] Above all, while sociologists have

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recognized all this and have reacted against essentializing (the change from 'doing' into 'being') trends the gay movement itself moved towards it while invoking the rhetoric of emancipation. Thus Angus Wilson's identification with the modern gay movement (not that side of which fights against prejudice as such but the one which has created the distinct 'gay' sub-culture) does not necessarily imply that he has actually helped to fight against the stereotyping and categorization of homosexuals in the West.

To make this clear it must be kept in mind that the Greeks considered good-looking adolescent boys legitimate and natural objects of desire for normal men.[6] This passivity of the adolescent was institutionalized in their culture so that moral stigma attached to man boy love unless the latter was mercenary or immodest. The Roman and oriental cultures favoured the same attitude in relation to men but made an important reservation in the case of the boy-catamites. Passivity was now disgraceful not because it was homosexual but because it was feminine and in a strongly patriarchal culture discrepant ethical statdards existed for the sexes. The catamite, if discovered, would have to face social obloquy because he had chosen the females' role.[7] However, adolescent boys' beauty was celebrated more often than female beauty in Muslim mystic literature where indeed, it symbolized divine beauty.[8] Among the Muslims, however, whereas the desire for boys was not considered 'abnormal' or 'sick', it was indeed considered sinful - as, of course, were all extra-marital sexual activities.[9]

The tradition of the Renaissance was not essentialist either. Sodomy with youths - for there is no evidence proving the existence of the kind of adult-homosexuality which exists today - was viewed with horror but it was considered a product of inordinate lust not mental illness or biological determinism.[10] Later homosexual sub-cultures emerged and by the early twentieth century homsexual behaviour had become linked in people's minds with effeminacy and neurosis.[11] In the Victorian Public School, however, the oriental model of the older boy - younger boy or man-boy relationships prevailed. However, there was a strong tradition of sentimental friendship, spiritual devotion on the David-Jonathan or the platonic model, as well as coarse eroticism.[12] More often than not tenderness was not absent in these relationships but, if the relationship was sexual, the boy who had taken the feminine role could be teased and, presumably, psychologically harmed. His active partner, was, however, treated with such envious chaff as heterosexual philanderers are subjected to nowadays.[13]

While conceding that such attitudes were neither fair nor conducive to the happiness of all concerned, it must not go unnoticed that they - like those of the Renaissance - were not essentialist in conception. That is to say that they did not assume that people were *either* 'homosexual' or 'heterosexual' and that if they were the former they were effeminate. abnormal or neurotic. They made it possible for the ephebophile not to be categorized as an alien being in the public school 'milieu' and for the catamite to escape social obloquy if he could conceal that aspect of his past as a grown-up. (The mutual sexual practices of grown-up men were, of course, not very well understood so that it was only being sodomized which was disgraceful). There was, in other words, no psychological imperative to define one's sexualityand, with reference to it, one's social identity and behaviour pattern. I have therefore based this article on the assumption that the modern attitude towards homosexuality, because it does not distinguish between varieties of homosexual behaviour, has created a stereotype of the 'homosexual' in the public mind which has alienated more people who respond to males than the attitudes of the Orient, Rome or the Victorian public schools. Since the modern image of the homosexual as effeminate, neurotic and incapable of marriage is rooted in pseudo-scientific theories it is an inescapable fact of the Western man's mental conditioning. Since this feature of it could give a negative self-image and endengers gender-confusion in all those who have for any reason, homosexual experiences, it is, in fact, less humanitarian in effect than per-modern prejudices.

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that though Angus Wilson has debunked Victorian paternalistic attitudes towards homosexuality he has not helped in breaking the modern stereotypes about it. In fact, I shall contend that his fiction helps to confirm the myths which have made this stereotyping and its concomitant alienation of the 'homosexual' possible.

With this in mind I will come to the fiction of Angus Wilson and see how it relates to modern Western sterotypes of homosexuality.

To begin with he makes no distinction between the different manifestations of homsexuality according to the choice of sex-objects. In 'El Dona Frentes', a short story included in *The Wrong Set*, Mr. Newman is an ephebophile since he likes an eighteen year old Swedish youth called Sven. Eric, the boy-friend of Bernard Sands, the protagonist of *Hemlock and After*[14] (1952), is a youth too. However, Eric is described more in conformity with the Greek-Roman Oriental image of ephebes than Sven. He is considered 'a good-loking boy' by the cashier with something very distinguished obout his dark eyes and fair wavy hier (HAA 34). In fact he has the prettiness of a page and

gratifies himself by narcissistically comparing himself with 'the youngest of Lorenzo's pages' (p. 32). This preoccupation with youthfulness and boyish good-looks is central to Hamo Langmuir's sexual problems in *As if By Magic*. Hamo Langmuir, the eminent agriculturist whose magic crop has created great wealth cheek by jowl with abject poverty in rice-growing countries, is a typical ephebophile, His relationship with Leslie, inspite of the latter's genuine affeciton, cannot be sustained when Leslie's boyish looks vanish.

> 'You can't have it off with someone of twenty-five. I think I can take that part as read now' (says Leslie) 'All right' [replies Hamo] 'Make it difficult for me to say. Anyway, with anyone else but you, it would be twenty-two. Only you look so young' [AIBM 67].

Hamo embarks upon a quest for 'the fairest Youth in the world' and finds him in Ceylon. The ephebe has an ideal shape [waist 24, hips 35, chest 30] [p 173, 230] which emphasizes buttocks rather than male genitel organs. This image of the ephebe is reinforced in descriptions of Ray in *Late Call* whose face is like 'a beautiful girl [s]' [LC 99] and of Mircus who in *No Laughing Matter* goes out as a sixteen year old boy to be picked up by men.

However, the 'Uncles' in *As if By Magic* are paedophiles. The boys they prefer are either pre-puberal children or pubescents. That is why Hamo makes it quite [lear that he likes adolescent boys and youths but not children. When one of the paedophiles invites him to gratify himself with the boys, he declares :

> 'I'm afraid thay are all a bit tender for me' [p. 167]

Obviously the writer does distinguish between the differences in sexual orientation. Similarly the writer distinguishes between Hamo's ephebophilia and Martin's androphilia [the latter likes Leslie after he ceases to please Hamo]. But all these distinctions are lost in the general categorization of all these behaviour-patterns under the rubric of 'homosexuality'. Thus the passive homosexuality of Marcus and Leslie as adults, the acceptance of the catamite's role in the case of Ray, Eric, Larry, Hassan and the native youths fancied by Hamo, as well as the active androphilia, paedophilia and ephebophilia of the various characters are all evaluated by the same homophobic social criteria.

The consequences of this are that most heterosexual characters express enlightened liberal sentiments while detesting homosexuals whereas, on another level, the homosexuals themselves internalize these negative and self-rejective attitudes and exhibit neurotically alienated behaviour-patterns. The first kind of attitude is illustrated by Bernard's daughter Elizabeth who says :

'Oh theoretically, I know. Elizabeth was impatient. 'It would have been pretty awful if you hadn't. I'm not medieval or something. I quite like queers if it comes to that, so long as they're not on the make like Evelyn's boys. I' d abolish all those ridiculous laws anyday. But then, I don't believe in capital punishment, or at least, I' m not sure, but *if* I didn't I wouldn't immediately commit murder' (HAA 58).

But these platitudinous assertions of liberal-individualism do not conceal the unmitigated contempt she feels for homosexuals. Her highly emotive vocabulary, in fact, reveals her real feelings. She not only categorizes people like her father as well as catamites and pathics as 'homosexual' but uses the word 'queer' which adduces her own acceptance of the myth of their being abnormal or mentally ill. Incidentally she does not consider the possibilities of Bernard's sex-objects being psychologically harmed though that would have been a defensible moral position. Her real objection, inspite of the individualist rhetoric of we're all quite separate adults and we can't rule our lives and wants by what's going to shock the others' (p. 59), is precisely that her father is not socially accceptable to her if he is stigmatized as a 'homosexual,. The rest is the lip-service the modern liberal pays to ideals which cannot but fail as long as the 'homosexual' is alienated as a 'type' apart from the rest of the society.

The same stock-response comes from the two fathers Professor Middleton and Harold when they learn that their sons are 'homosexuals'. When Elvira tells the Professor that John 'is a homosexual' (ASA 202), also using the word 'queer' for him, he answers slowly ·

'I didn't know that John was a homosexual' he said 'I know very little obout him really, and even less about the subject we're discussing. I' ve only come across it three or four times in my life, among people I actually knew, that is. It revolts me rather, I think, but I'm not violent about the subject. I'm just not interested'. (ASA 202)

But, notwithstanding his disblaimers to the contrary, the Professor is prejudiced about the subject and his lack of interest is only from homophobic distaste. He tells Mrs Portway about Gilbert Stakesay that 'whatever his faults (he) was completely normal' (p. 289) and reveals his complete acceptance of the modern idea that only heterosexuals are 'normal' and that ephebophilia - for John likes adolescent boys - is abnormal.

Harold, interestingly enough, is not as revolted by the suspicion of ephebophilia on the Public School model as he is by passive homosexuality. This is a point which critics have not interpreted with reference to these

discrepant attitudes towards homosexuality. Gransden[15] relates it to the Victorian convention of silence whereas Arthur Edelestein sees it solely as further evidence of Harold's dishonest pretense of largemindedness when he says :

> The 'understanding' letter he writes to his older son, on learning that the latter is a homosexual (it was evident all along, though not to Harold), is [a] futile and dishonest gesture-after-the-fact.[16]

The supporting evidence for this view is furnished by the letter he writes to Ray in which he says :

> If you had, what was probably only a passing phase in every adolescents' life [I seem dimly to remember some 'crush' as we called them on a golden-haired, cherubic junior-by-now no doubt a hoary father of five - in my own school days] [it] need never have assumed the exaggerated proportions in your life that it has now [LC-3 5].

Harold's confession of an infatuation with a 'choir-boy' is reminiscent of the typical experience of Victorian upper form public school boys. Since the female role was given to the younger and prettier partner, the senior boy never lost his positive image as a male. Secondly, once again in the Victorian tradition, such an infatuation was considered a 'passing phase'. The modern image of homosexuality being a pathological condition of mind and therefore likely to be permanent had, as I have mentioned earlier, still not been unanimously accepted. Thus Harold receives no great shock as long as he does not suspect his son of having given up the male role. Even when Mark says ,Ray's never liked girls' [p. 298]. he probably thinks it is because he has not grown out of his 'crushes' on 'cherrubic' boys Ry's first letter, too, is quite obscure. He does not specify his sexual role in relation to Geoffrey. It is only when the second letter comes and Ray reveals that 'Geoffery had wanted him to join him for the past three years' [p. 310] and that he now worked for him and lived in his flat that Harold realizes that his son is a despised catamite. It is then that he reveals his Victorian prejudice for males who take the women's part and call him 'a little whore' [p 312]. Had he actually internalized modern indescriminating homophobic values he would have reacted more like Professor Middleton or Elizabeth, but because he adheres to paternalistic values he practices what is, in effect, male-chauvinism rather than hetero-chauvinism'.

On the whole the homosexual underworld is depicted as mean, ignoble and selfish. Isobel finds so many beautiful pansy young men, all with the same standard voices, jargon, bow-ties and complicated hair-do's, that she tended now to ignore them' [SDD 157]. Sherman, in *Hemlock and After* is a homosexual and his introduction to Eric is described as follows :

Sherman Winter, however, advanced eagerly towards them. 'Bernard my dear, Heavens !, Sherman's speech had not changed for twenty-five years 'And with such beauty, double Heavens ! Don't be cagey, dear, introduce !' when Bernard said, 'This is Sherman winter, Eric Craddock, Sherman. I only hope you hate each other like poison'. (HAA 88)

And this caricatured 'Pansy manner forms the distinctive of feature the minor homosexual figures. Along with the manner goes the implicit suggestion that such artificial human beings are inadequate even on moral grounds Leslie, though so unselfish and devoted to Hamo, does leave him to live with Martin in his quest for self-fulfilment However, given the liberal cult of sexual release and self-fulfilment, the author can approve of him for this with impunity. What is less praiseworthy is his denial to lend his villa to Alexandra, his niece, when she is pregnant, when his man-friend Martin insists on lending it to her he says :

If Ally has her baby in my villa then that's the last you'll see of me (AIBM 117)

And that is enough to make Martin recant his generous offer and tell Alexandra that in an individualistic society the imperative of helping others would have to be abandoned under the illusion of self-reliance. The 'Uncles' have a seraglio ot oriental boys whom they exploit with impunity in *As if By Mogic.* Here, however, the writer shows his complete disapproval for what is , in effect, a variant of slavery. The anti-colonial overtones ot the book are by no means counteracted by Hamo' s own penchant for the local youths. The latter are older and, in every case, willing partners whereas the young boys have been seduced by economic inducement. On this assumption even Marcus who keeps Arab catamites in *No Iaughing Matter* does not emerge as blameless as Hamo. The other major figure such as Bernard Sands and John Middleton too cannot escape censure.

Bernard Sand's case, however is of central significance in establishing the consequences of the homophobic reaction towards homosexuals in western societies. Here it is a successful author, a socially-accepted man, who accepts homophobic attitudes while paying lip-service to liberal ideals . 'I could say I've made my attitude on the subject perfectly clear . In *Night Gleaning* and, again in my essay on Goethe' (HAA 58) he tells Elizabeth as indeed he has. But still, in practice, he feels thrilled when a homosexual young man is arrested for importuning in Liecester Square . This has been seen as a case of the modern failure of humanism. A. O. J. Cockshut pointing out this

failure compares it with Hubert's attempts to procure a thirteen year old girl He asks the question:

> Where is the difference ? Is it merely that one kind of perversion is more repulsive than another ? If it is just a matter of taste, then tastes will naturally vary, Is it that one kind is more anti-social than another ?

And concludes. by way of reply, that Bernard is a humanist who 'despairs, yet never ceases to clutch in his agony at humanism's tattered banner'[17] Other critics too seem to favour conceptions about the presence of evil motives in good actions. C. B. Cox,[18] for instance, feels that awareness of such negative motives makes his final redemption possible, whereas jay Halio says that there is a 'streak of cruelty or sadism that underlies his humanist love'[19] Edwin Riddel, however, seeks to explain his failure in terms of the incompatibility of the humanist temperament in the modern world . He says :

> The important thing about the characterization of Bernard Sands is that he is the humanist temperament in the modern materialistic society, but the whole underlying question of his position is whether the novelist can occupy the same place today as the novelist of the nineteenth century whom wilson so admires [20] .

In fact it is hardly a question of the compatibility of humanism with either 'modern materialistic society' or a Fruedian mistrust of one's good motives, It is merely an illustration of the humanist idea that the values of kindness, charity and altruism are not compatible with homophobia. Bernard Sand's failure is an individual moral failure though, of course, it would not have taken this form in a society which had not had such prejudices against homosexuals , As it is, he has internalized these prejudices and they have impaired his moral integrity and made him, without being fully cognizan of it, unsympathetic to the open homosexual. That is why he persuades his ex-boyfriend not to stay with the notorious Sherman :

> 'I'm sorry' said Bernard . 'I just don't think anyone who stays long at Sherman's will be much worth knowing . I thought, at least, that you'd learnt that sort of open ruthlessness and cruelty were not only disgusting, but also calculated to put people off' (HAA 96).

In fact, Bernard is on the side of snobs like Evelyn and hypocrites like Elizabeth . His effort to prevent Terence from living with Sherman is a

defence of the very attitudes which makes his daughter so unsympathetic, Since he stands higher in the 'pecking order' than Sherman he can imply that the latter is despicable on account of his open homosexual behaviour. From this point of view his behaviour towards Eric too is selfish, If he is helping to foster and perpetuate the social values which could give the boy a negative self-image as being a 'pansy', and 'queer' he is ethically unjustified in introducing him to the homosexual underworld or initiating him into paederasty at all . This, it may be said, is the case against John Middleton's relations with the boy Larry . Here the Socratic allusion to Hemlock rings false since Greek boys were not similarly placed in relation to their cultural norms.

In the light of this reasoning the failure of Bernard to feel sorry for the young man can be understood. His reaction to the young man's arrest is described as follows :

> It was neither compassion nor fear that had frozen Bernard . He could only remember the intense, the violent excitement that he had felt when he saw the hopeless terror in the young man's face, the tension with which he had watched for the disintegration of a once confident human being , He had been ready to join the hounds in the kill (HAA 53) .

The incident is of such vital import that Angus Wilson comments upon it in his autobiographical book *The wild Garden.*

> The scene in Leicester Square in which he realizes with desperation his own sadistic nature may appear too sudden a revelation for a man of Bernard's intelligence who has already passed middle age (p. 31)

But the writer fails to realize that, in the crypts of his mind, Bernard Sands has accepted the popular derogatory image of the homosexual . In Mrs. Evelyn's party, let us remember, he ostentatiously sees himself in the role of the apparently respectable' god-father of the disreputable 'queer' group. Thus, he reflects, if the latter drove out, the older, more effete, more established, more indigenous fauna' he would have to take the side of the other group and remain to make havoc with the destructive invaders. It was after all only a question of which kind of rat you preferred to be' (HAA 102) . This is the mood in which he has a discussion with charles about the exercise of authority :

> 'I' m not particularly happy with those in authority, although I get on with them all right' (p. 1 9)

He declares in conclusion and goes to Leicester Square to wait for Terence. The homosexual young man tries to attract his attention but he disregards him with assumed frigidity. The young man is 'second rate' in his eyes and from such people Charles's embittered acceptance of his official station in life has preserved him' (p. 106). This sets off the process of ratiocination which begins by an identification with the heterosexual world, and goes on to reject the young man as belonging to a category apart from his own world and consequently he feels pleasure at the young man's arrest. It is the pleasure of a heterosexual who hates all homosexuals and he feels it because he has identified with the heterosexual world. In essence it is the reaction of the victorian public school ephebophile who does not accept himself as a homosexual at all and sees his inclusion in that category as a threat to his male-image. Since the open passive homosexual is as much a threat to his security as he is to the homophobic heterosexual, so both join in the hunt when the time comes.

However, the Victorian public-School paederast would not have been called a 'queer' anyway. The modern ephebophile is. So the imperative to secure his psychological integrity makes him dissociate with the most offending members of the homosexual world. This is not to deny that Bernard Sands had elements of cruelty in his psyche. His exploitation of boys and the inability to communicate with his wife are, to some extent, the outcome of cruelty. It is, however, worth stating clearly that it is modern homophobia intensified by his resentment at being considered 'queer' which brings out this hidden cruelty at a crucial time,

The other major myths which may not apply to all homosexuals but are reinforced are - as already mentioned - the myths of marriage being incompatible with homosexuality; the alleged preference for male genitalia; the alleged appeal of hardness in the sex-object; and that they molest little boys. Taking the marriages of homosexuals we find that Bernard Sand's marriage is unhappy and he remains 'alone and yet never alone' (TWG 99). He feels guilty for marrying her and is for ever recalling that he had done his wife a great wrong'. This is a judgement most critics often pass on the marriages of boy-lovers. Philippe Julian, for example, says about Oscar Wilde's marriange:

> Oscar suddenly decided to live an ordered life; he came to a decision, perhaps the most serious mistake that this charming man was to commit: he married[21].

Though, as Richard Burton pointed out, in the Muslim orient the paterfamilias often turned to the Ganymede[22] once his wife, or wives became unshapely. Other marriages in Angus Wilson, such as Mr. Newman's are tension ridden

too. Mr. Newman's object of desire, the flirtatious Swedish youth Sven decides that 'if so kind a man should behave stupidly, it would be necessary to be very polite and very firm' (WS 216); But this does not prevent the youth from wanting to 'make that bitch unhappy' (meaning, of course, Mrs. Newman). The youth does that and comes home with Mr. Newman without having spent the night with him, He has, however, the ring symbolozing his surrogate-marriage intimacy with Mr. Newman whereas Mrs. Newman only gets a pendant. She refuses to wear the pendant and the story ends ambiguously with Sven about to depart and Mrs. Newman reconciled with her husband. However, this is only subterfuge as far as the husband is concerned. He is glad because he has not been found out :

> 'Safe thought Edwin, safe, thank God ! But the room seemed without air, almost stifling He threw open one of the windows and let in a refreshing breeze that blew across from the hills (WS 233).

The homosexual marriage, Angus Wilson has shown precludes real communication and genuine intimacy.

Other homosexual characters do not marry at all preferring to live with members the same sex or alone. In *Hemlock and After* Terence and Sherman want to live together; in *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes* John wants to keep Larry; in *Late Call* Ray leaves home to live with Geoffrey and in *As if By Magic* Leslie and Martin live like a married couple. In *The Middle-Age of Mrs. Eliot*, David lives alone after his friend's death whereas in *No Laughing Matter* Marcus keeps Arab catamites. The reluctance to marry is clearly portrayed in *As if by Magic* when Alexandra offers to marry Hamo. Having been conditioned in the west, Hamo, of course, considers himself a 'queer' and thinks that 'it was all wrong. First, because all women married to queers were deceived' (p. 364). then other stereotyped ideas come to his mind. 'He tried to remind himself that she had no cock, but then had he ever cared whether the youths he fucked had cocks or not ?' (p. 364). Though Hamo gets rid of this idea by self-knowledge, but even in his case, obsessed though he is by youth's buttocks, he cannot fully emancipate himself from the stereotype, Even when he is drowning, he thiks 'it would never have done, womens' bodies suck you in, I need the hard resistance of a youth' (p. 368). This is, however, not really true, He likes youths only when they are not hirsute like men and he tells the Jonkheer I' have no taste for the tough. That I can promise you' (p. 168).

Thus when the second English 'uncle' teases him about a youth he had fancied calling him 'hoary' and 'hairy' Hamo not only shudders at the adjectives but

insists on the youth's tenderness saying he was 'a smooth nineteen' (p. 168). All the youths he fancies have the qualities of the ideal ephebes - smoothness, coyness, good-looks and slenderness. His senses tell him that he likes a girl with such attributes :

> It was a sensation he had never known, a lust and a sort of bursting through of worship into desire that made his head swim, his ears ring. If only, he thought, there had been girls like this, like boys when he was younger (p. 364).

But the attitudes he has accepted from his society prove even stronger than the direct evidence of his senses and Hamo Langmuir cannot get married. In this context it may be remembered that Hamo and Ray are among the noblest of the homosexuals, Hamo dies while trying to prevent a riot in Goa which has been caused because of his methods of rice cultivation. The families whom his innovations have impoverished - to whom, ironically enough, his ephebes belong - gather together as a mob, which throws him into the river where he drowns. Ray has the moral courage to live with Geoffrey and has always been helpful to Sylvia, his grandmother. Yet both these characters consider themselves abnormal. Hamo, as has already been said, admits himself to be a 'queer' (AIBM 354) and Ray tells his brother Mark how he would have settled down in Carshall. 'If I was normal, that is, but then I'm not' (LC 299). Similarly John Middleton accepts himself to be a case of oedipal complex. His mother's excessive love, he thinks, had made him a homosexual. In hysterical diatribe after Larrie's absconding from his mother's house he reveals his complete acceptance of Freudian theories of homosexuality :

> John shouted at her more violently each minute. He had rehearsed this scene so often in his life when her possessivenesss had threatened him that now the words poured out before his sense of shame could stop them. 'You'd better get wise to yourself, Thingy' he said, 'you've never considered anyone else but yourself for a minute of your life. Your affection for me ! you've tried to strangle me with your selfish love ! He laughed hysterically in her face. 'If you don't care for my friendships you can thank your unhealthy, greedy love, for me ? He was horrified to hear himself speak all these stock, casebook sentences.
>
> Inges great round mouth opened wide, but she only mumbled, 'It was not a good friendship, your friendship, with Larrie, Jonnie'. He stared at her for a moment, 'That bloody swine your husband's been talking to you' he said (ASA 310).

John seems to accept himself as a psychological case' with the acquiscence created by a non-critical faith in 'case-book sentences', There is nothing in the book which would suggest that such theory may itself be suspect outside the western social context. Nor is the force of this aetiological assumption mitigated by presenting an alternative one in the case of Marcus. There is, however, a departure from the accepted norm. Neither is there a possessive mother in this case, nor is Marcus seduced by a homosexual, He confesses that he started going out at sixteen with 'red on my cheeks and my lips from my paint-box, and sometimes blue on my eyelids' (NLM 201). He begins, therefore, by pretending to be a catamite and tries to imitate the homosexual by adopting the stereotyped mincing gait and even pinning flowers on his coat. The more he is scared the more he lapses into this alienating mimesis. He confesses :

> Once when I'd pinned a small bunch of violets on to my overcoat a man came up and said 'Bloody little pouff ?' They ought to poleaxe the lot of you ! I was so scared I peed myself, but I only put on a more queeny act I held the collars of my overcoat together as though it was the sables of the Grandduchess and smuggled out of Vladivostock, I just longed to be noticed. It didn't matter how. (p 20)

But this is a small deviation from the norm and loses its significance since, however he started, Marcus becomes obviously effeminate at the age of twenty-one :

> His good-looks, however, are of the kind that do not give promise of the masulinity demanded conventionally in our own day of those who call them men.....
>
> His intermediate type has never perhaps found a satisfactory social niche since Saint Paul, interpreting Jesus Christ's revolutionary views in the light of his own perculiar sexual temperament, brought to an end the long-lived sexual morality of the Romano Hellenic world. In 1925 he stands between the national scapegoatism of Oscar Wilde and the national obsessive attention of the later decades. Given England, he has no choice but to be 'artistic' (p. 206).

Thus, though Marcus has become a catamite particularly for economic reasons and partially because he does not get adequate maternal love at home, he is regarded by the author as the 'intermediate type' later. The stereotype is asserted and the little departure from convention becomes unimportant since only a reader familiar with multicultural theories of homosexuality would notice it.

Strangely enough, there is another departure from Western expectations. Marcus, after having been a pathic for long (as his more serious emotional relationship with Jack and his carnal passion for the virile Ted (pp. 303-307) prove) becomes an ephebophile, much according to the oriental pattern, in his middle age, He is shown to have a playful erotic relationship with a catamite called Hassan whom he pulls, for instance, 'face downwards on the cushions beside him' (p. 429). He also develops a taste for dancing boys and lives like an oriental aristocrat. Of course, Angus Wilson is aware of the expected transition of the catamite to the married man and the ephebophile in oriental societies. The catamite Hassan at the age of twenty six, for instance, is 'married and building a fine family. What he may have been as a pretty boy of sixteen is long forgotten' (p. 458). But this is a transition which no other character makes and is therefore, distinctive. It does not, however, help in breaking the stereotype because there is little differentiation between ephebophilia and adult homosexuality in the Western mind, If Marcus had turned to girls, however, he would have been considered to have become 'normal' and that would, indeed, have been a striking departure from the stereotyped norm,

This transition may have been because Marcus too does not really accept his homosexuality though the writer does not make that clear. The only thing which seems to point to that interpretation is his bitter memory connected with the events of his youth. He cries when he recounts how a major had insulted him when he told him that Margaret the short story-writer was his sister (NLM 203). The major is, obviously, one of those grown-up Victorian schoolboys who considered themselves normal and the youths they exploited 'bitches' (p, 203) Thus Marcus's indulgence in oriental catamites when in a position of economic power may be an act of vengeance on the unfeeling cruelty of the exploiters he met with as a boy.

The cruelty associated with homosexuality may itself be related to the cultural images of it in the minds of the participants. The first type is purely neurotic and has been more in evidence in modern Western Literature than any other. Of this type the works of the Marquis de Sade are the seminal source. His works are full of gratuitous cruelty which is relished since it is productive of sexual pleasure. In English Literature, however, D H. Lawrence's short story 'The Prussian Officer' with its theme of the Officer's lust for his orderly changing into cruelty was the first work by a major artist of this nature. Thus Angus Wilson's self-confessed experience involving the transformation of lust into cruelty follows a tradition much in evidence in Modern

Literature. In this context it may be worthwhile to remember that Wilson recounts an experience ot this nature from his own boyhood as follows :

> More distrubing to me is the recollection that, at as late an age as fifteen, I deliberately burned moths in the flame of a candle that lit my bedroom in the seaside house we rented during the summer holidays. I also remember clearly that this childish perversity was closely connected with sexual excitement and that the moths were fairly conscious substitutes for boys at school who had aroused my lust (TWG 80).

And this may be a possible explanation for making Bernard Sands possess a streak of cruelty in his mental make-up

It is the cruelty born out of prejudice and fear, however, which is more relevant. Though Angus wilson says 'suppressed lusts laced with sadism are, of course, the common-places of English public school education' (TWG 80), This was not always the case, as has been said earlier, but he is not entirely wrong in that this has changed in the modern age as tenderness has come to be dismissed as sentimentalism, and all forms of homosexual behaviour are liable to create personality crises and negative feelings. Thus cruelty towards homosexuals has increased because they have come to be seen as abnormal and effeminate. If this makes the public-school senior boy with a penchant for juniors more hostile and cruel than his Victorian predecesssor it is understandable in that he resists being thus categorized,

If it be conceded that attitudes must be evaluated by the social effects of their acceptance, it must be contended that modern values have significantly failed in making homosexuals find happiness within the society. They have merely extended the negative categorization to ephebophiles while not eliminating the others. In his depiction of homosexuals, therefore, Angus Wilson neither sees them as individuals nor in the spirit of liberal-humanism. Thus his fiction fails to transcend the prejudices of his age and culture and stands condemmed on that count.

Notes and References

1, Stephen Adams, *The Homosexual in Contemporary Fiction,* (London : Vision Press, 1980), p, 156.

2. K.W, Grandsen, *Angus Wilson - Writers and Their Works, No.* 2.8,(London: Longman, 1969), p. 11; Also see Walter Allen *Tradition and Dream,* (London; Phoenix House, 1964), p,292.

3. This is the thesis of Kenneth Plummer in *Sexual Stigma* (London ; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975); Also see Plummer - ed - *The Making of the Modern Homosexual*, (London : Hutchinson, 1981), pp. 18-29

4. This point was made by Mary McIntosh in The Homosexual Role', *Social Problems*, Vol 16, No. 2, (1968), pp. 182-92; Also see Rudolph Trumbach, 'London's Sodomites : Homosexual Behaviour and Western Culture in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Social History*, Vol II, No. 1, 1977, pp. 1-33.

5. Plummer (1981), pp. 54-75.

6. K J. Dover, Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behaviour', *Arethusa*, Vol. 6, (1973), p. 65.

7. Trumbach, p. 8-9.

8. Robert Graves and Omar Ali Shah, *The Rubaiyyat of Omar Khayyam*. (London ; Cassell & Company Ltd, 1976), p. 7; Also see the article on 'Islamic Mysticism', *Encyclopaedia Brittanica*, Vol. 9, p. 944.

9. Richard Burton. trans, *Arabian Nights*, Vol X, (London : privately printed, 1886), pp. 208-254.

10. Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance Ensland*, (London : Gay Man's press, 1982), p. 35.

11. Bray, p. 103; Trumbach, p.17 Ulrich's theories popularized by Edward Carpenter, *The Intermediate Sex* (London : Swan Sonneschein 1909) helped further to equate homosexuality with effeminacy; krafft-Ebing and Freud's work helped to link it, in the public mind, with mental illness and neuroses.

12. For the themes of Man-boy love see J. Z, Eglinton, *Greek Love* (London : Neville Spearman Ltd, 1971), pp. 364-405 and Timothy D'Arch Smith; *Love in Earnest* (London ; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 162-196. Whereas Eglinton uses the word 'Greek Love' and Smith 'Uranian love' for sexual or emotionla response towards adolescent boys or youths, I have called it 'ephebophilia' in my unpublished M A. dissertation 'Ephebephilia in Late Victorian English Literature', University of Sheffield 1982. This is to distinguish it from paedophilia (child-molestation) on the one hand and androphilia (responding to grown-up men) on the other.

13. See the boastful attitude of Tully who seduces younger boys in Roger G'ellerts' Play, *Quaint Honour*, (London : Secker and Warburg, 1958)

14. References to the works of Angus Wilson will be cited parenthetically in the text and denoted by prominent initials as follows :
ASA *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes*; London : Secker & Warburg, 1961.

AIBM *As If By Magic* London : Secker & Warburg, 1973
HAA *Helock and After* London :Secker & Warburg, 1950
LC *Late Call* London : Secker & Warburg, 1964
NLM *No Laughing Matter* London : Secker & Warburg, 1967
SDD *Such Darling Dados* London : Secker & Warburg, 1959
TWS *The Wrong Set* London : Secker & Warburg, 1961
MME *The Middle Age of Mrs. Eliot* London : Secker & Warburg, 1958
TWG *The Wild Garden* London : Secker & Warburg, 1963
BOM *A Bit off the Map* London : Secker & Warburg, 1957

15. Gransden, p. 11.
16. Arthur Edelestein, 'Angus Wilson : The Territory Behind', ed Charles Shapiro, *Contemporary British Novelists* (Southern Illinois University press, 1965; London : Arcturus, 1969), p. 151.
17. A.O.J. Cockshut, 'Favoured Sons; the Moral World of Angus Wilson', *Essays in Criticism*, Vol. 9, i, 1959, pp. 50-60.
18. C B Cox, The Humanism of Angus Wilson : A study of *Hemlock and After', Critical Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Autumn 1964),p.233,
19. Jay L. Halio, *Angus Wilson*, (London: Oliver Boyd, 1964), p. 34.
20. Edwin Riddel, 'The Humanist character in Angus Wilson' *English* Vol. 21, No. 11, (1972), p.49.
21. Philippe Julian, *Oscar Wilde*, (London : Constable & Co Ltd, 1969) p. 135.
22. Burton, p. 233

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David E. Wellbery, *Lessing's Laocoon: Semiotics and Aesthetics in the Age of Reason.* Cambridge, 1984. pp. 275.

This book begins with the broad mandate suggested by its subtitle and moves towards the specific analysis of Lessing's *Laocoon*. Wellbery's method is historicist in the best sense, but his book is anything but a traditional history of aesthetics. Inspired by Arthur Danto and Michel Foucault, Wellbery attempts to "describe the set of theoretical Parameters that, in a particular age. programmed what counts as a work of art, an aesthetic quality, or an aesthetic experience" (p 1). Thus he seeks to show that the new discipline of aesthetics was *made possible* in late eighteenth-century Germany by a certain type of thinking about signs. Wellbery offers novel enterpretations of the foudations of aesthetics and his discussion of the Enlightenment's concern with the sign raises questions of continuing importance today when semiotic analysis is central in the humanities.

What Wellbery sees as the framework Enlightenment semiotics was constructed by Christian Wolff, and the analysis of Wolff's thinking provides many of the ideas necessary for the later chapters, The first of these ideas is that "representation" is fundamental to eighteenth-century thought and to its semiotics in particular. The question of how Wolff's theory of representation came to be taken as truth, and an account of the effects this theory had on contemporary semiotics and aesthetics is precisely what interests Wellbery. For example, several "oppositional pairs"--obscure/clear, confused/distinct, non extensive/extensive, incomplete/complete--stem from Wolff's definition of representation as binary, and for Wellbery, "constitute part of the conceptual grid which, in the Enlightenment, governed and organized inquiry in various domains. Indeed . . . the questions raised and the answers found in Lessing's *Laocoon* were made possible by the representational structure of knowledge in the eighteenth century" (p. 15).

Wellbery goes on in this first chapter to discuss the relationship of eighteenth- and twentieth-century conceptions of the sign. He uncovers more differences than similarities, and perhaps the greatest divergance involves the inception and use of individual signs, For Sausseur and most modern semioticians, signs are spawned and controlled by society and its institutions, But in the eighteenth century, notions of freedom held sway to the extent that "the sign [was] essentially a name freely chosen to mark a representation itself directly knowable; language [was] a nomenclature for the realm of ideas" p.19). From Wolff to Lessing, there are two types of signs to mark these representations: "arbitrary" and "natural." Natural signs are the most common since throuh them the world "communicates" to man, shows him

fire, for example, with smoke. As Wellbery points out, the distinctions between the types of signs are not always clear, but arbitrary signs seem to be created solely by man as a means to signal his all-important representations. Thus we come to undrstand how important signs are : without them we could not cmmunicate, think, or even perceive. The classification of these signs was a constant preoccupation in eighteenth-century philosophy partly because arbitrary signs were thought to be inferior to the natural type. Natural signs were held to derive from God's choice, his language, (thus preserving the notion of freedom) : our language was supposed to strive for similar purity by bringing its arbitrary signs in line with God's natural ones. This moral and theological imperative figures largely in the Enlightenment's hierarchy of the arts, since, as Wellbery shows, the individual arts came to be distinguished by their different use of signs.

Wellbery claims that the new field of semiotics is organized by the category of representation (as opposed to that of performance or expression). He asserts further that for Mendelssohn especially, the representational model defines Beauty. This model trades in logical and metaphysical distinctions rather than in the psychological aspects of aesthetics in whose terms Mendelssohn, Meier, and Baumgarten are usually considered. Here, then, Wellbery is redefining the history ofaesthet by emphasizing the importance of semioti for these thinkers. He defines the Enlightenment's science of signs as an attempt to answer the questions, what are the general laws of aesthetic semiosis and what are the specific laws that apply to the individual arts ?" (p.70) According to Wellbery, Mendelssohn anticipates Lessing by differentiating the various arts according to the semiological principle of the material nature of their essential signs, Painting's signs are necessarily two dimentional, for example, and this properly limits the content of the artform. Semiotics allows the particular separation and hierarchy of the Enlightenment : nowhere is this more evinent than in the *Laocoon*.

Wellbery's discussion of Lessing's text occupies more than half the book and integrates the ideas of the first two chapters. Semiotics was a complex and, at times, ambiguous science in the eighteenth-century, but our understanding of it is greatly assisted by the clarity of Wellbery's analyses and his willingness to summarize his argument. At the beginning of the Lessing chapter, for example, he recapitulates the general nature and role of signs ;

> When we think a truth, we are thinking an idea, or group of ideas, that corresponds to a real state of affairs. But because the mind is finite, it cannot think ideas alone. They are too elusive .... Therefore man marks his ideas with signs [that]... allow him to recall his representations ,

> . . . The link between sign and idea is arbitrary . . , [and thus] a distance is opened up between sign and idea, and in the space of this distance resides the possiblity of error. (p. 99)

The potential gap between sign and idea troubles Lessing and helps to determine the distinctions he draws between the arts, Like those thinkers already discussed, Lessing wants the arts to present and preserve the intuition or presence-to-mind of the idea All the Enlightenment semioticeans mistrust the inevitable materiality of the sign in what is--though Wellbery doesn't mention it--a noticeably Platonic way. Yet recognizing the need for signs, Lessing insists that they provide a direct intuition of the real. The less material a sign is, the better able it is to perform this function : this is the basis of Lessing's famous valuation of poetry over the visual arts.

To compare and arrange the arts on a scale of value, Lessing must first provide a common factor, which he calls "illusion." Both poet and painter create illusion, but with different means and results. For Lessing, poetry is decidedly superior because its signs are less material Critics have claimed that Lessing thus overturns the doctrine of *ut pictura poesis*, but Wellbery shows instead that Lessing has actually "relocated [this doctrine] on a different level of generality" (p. 198). Poetry *is* like painting--both seek illusion-but poetry is more semiotically advanced than its rival. Lessing's often-remarked bias in favor of poetry finds a semiotic justification in Wellbery's analysis. Painting and sculpture, which Lessing conflates, are more "worldly" because their signs are more material. "Painting . . . is less purified than poetry" (p. 136), and its worldliness is to be transcended (again in a Platonic sense). Lessing's is thus a teleological view of the individual arts based on a "progressive semiosis," on the principle that types of signs and the arts to which they properly apply can be refined,

Wellbery's explication of Lessing's attempt to raise the stature of poetry is so direct and clear that it is beyond reproach. At the same time, however, he seems too engaged with Lessing's semiotic system to be able to stand back and evaluate in any detail a claim like "the 'invisible' lies outside the semantic universe of painting and sculpture" (p. 150), or Lessing's belief that" it is impossible for painting to make use of [metaphor]' (p. 196). Wellbery does criticize such ideas briefly in his concluding remarks, but a more immediate response to the fruits of Lessing's semiotics is called for if as Wellbery wishes, we are to re-think Lessing's *Laocoon* and discover its continued application to the problems of philosophical aesthetics.

At the end of his study, however, Wellbery does discuss several areas of

present research suggested by Lessing's work : a "comparative analysis of the arts in terms of a typology of modes of sign production," "the general theory of narrativity," and "the semiotic definition of the negative" (pp, 245-47). Readers will, I think, be inspired by this book to add their own ideas to Wellbery's list. I would suggest an attempt to accommodate Wellbery's discussion of signs in Enlightenment aesthethetics to the semiotic art history of Norman Bryson's brilliant *Word and Image : French painting of the Ancienne Regime* (Cambridge, 1981). Bryson devotes his second chapter (The legible body : LeBrun") to the possibility of a semiotic "reading" of the human body in painting, a possibility danied by Lessing because of his rigorous separation of the semiotics of poetry and the visual arts, Another area of inquiry might be the relevance of the eighteenth-century penchant for ranking the arts. According to Lessing, the sign should be transparent so that the Idea can be seen perfectly, Since he claims that poetry's signs are less visible and thus more effective, he also seems to want the arts themselves to become immaterial. Are the arts and their signs then simply functional, mere Platonic shadows of a higher reality ? Lessing's conclusions prompt us to question the ontological status and social role of the arts, and Wellbery's study thus laudably fulfils its aim to promote the continuing importance of Lessing's *Laocoon.*

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Paul H. Fry : *The Reach of Criticism* : *Method and Perception in Literary Thr.ry*. New Haven : Yale University Press, 1983.

The Reach of Criticism is an excellent, timely book, coming as it does in the midst of controversies over methcd vs. dissemination, synchrony vs. diachrony, and in yet another key irony vs vision, Paul Fry's book is a learned and powerful critique of method that begins with the notion of "error" and ends with the affirmation of vision.

"Method" is a vexed term in literary theory, most often associated with the desire for a metalanguage and with spatial configurations which come to rest on a particular epistemology. To speak of method is to speak of the possibility of knowledge distinct from the subject. If knowledge can be separated from the activity of knowing, then it should be possible to lay bare the structure, the properties, the problematic elements of any given area. and to do so in a way that is both objective and intelligible to all. Method lays claim to such objectivity and universality (though such claims are often veiled in the more modern versions of its discourse), and in the process it organizes what it "knows" so that the structure itself of an area of knowledge is

is rendered present all at once. From Aristotle's predilection for classification to Northrop Fry's total form of literature, to Gadamer's connection between truth and method, and to contemporary versions of the grammar of language, the idea is to clarify, to structure, to define but especially to contain and thus "possess" knowledge through method. Method is a stabilizing principle, performing in literary theory a function equivalent to that played by form in literary studies.

Theory pays a considerable price for this stability. I will limit myself in this discussion to two aspects of the limitations of method. First, space in literary theory is a recuperative category, refusing to acknowledge in any final way the pressures of temporality. So for example knowledge transcends human time in Aristotle's reading of Oedipus, and familial relations are restored, recovered from the very jaws of time, in Frye's readings of Shakespearean romance. The desire for method in this sense would put into evidence the [Lacanian] subject's desire for an ego or mastery that cannot be achieved. Method assumes for itself the possibility of a totalizing knowledge, and indeed at times finds itself coterminous with such knowledge. What it rejects in so doing is the recognition of its own repression. The second limitation of method I wish to pursue--is all-too-neat distinction of subject and object, of knowledge and the activity of knowing--may stand in a metaphorical relation to the first. The ego's desire for mastery, in this case, would repress the function of that desire and its impact on the knowledge it presumably achieves. It would also have to repress, in the process, the de-stabilizing function of temporality, which robs us at each turn of the possibility of such mastery. Walter Benjamin tells us that one reason we read is to learn about "endings," since the knowledge of our own ending is forbidden us. Benjamin insists on the pressure that temporality exerts upon the possibility of knowledge, the way it thwarts our desire for closure and totality. Temporality also thwarts our desire for objectivity, for it triggers a will-to-power in us which finds its most satisfying but also most repressive expression in the concept of method.

It is in this ongoing theoretical discussion on method and its limitations that Paul Fry's book, *The Reach of Criticism*, inserts itself. Fry opposes to method a notion of "perception" which accounts for the intimacy between knowledge and the knowing subject and for the radical discontinuities produced by temporality. Though his meditation on the theoretical tradition begins with Aristotle, it could well have begun with Plato. Clasical criticism was uneasily aware of the difficulty of separating knowledge from subject, and from the language (rhetoric) through which such knowledge would have to be articulated. Plato's *Theaetetus* is an exemplary dialogue in this respect. When Socrates tackles an opponent in

other Platonic dialogues, he is usually able to demolish him by logic--a logic which partakes of the properties of method. But in the case of the *Theaetetus* Socrates abandons his stance of mastery, aborts the dialogue, so to speak, on this particular issue, and admits that on the question of knowledge there exists in all of us "a depth of darkness" Already in Plato we can find a dismantling of the very possibility of method, a refutation of its claims to knowledge, and it is this epistemological dislocation which underwrites the Longinian sublime. Aristotle, on the other hand, has been considered by virtually every critic a formalist who by way of "method" responds to Plato's arguments about art, and indeed, literary theorists have found it comfortable to divide Western theoretical practice into concerns with form and concerns with the sublime. Fry's brilliant deconstruction of Aristotelian criticism does away with this easy division. The sublime for Fry is a dislocation of form, but this dislocation occurs in the supposedly formalist text of *The Poetics*, which Fry reads in terms of Aristotle's repression of such dislocation,

To see two distinct paths of literary theory thus implicated, at the start, with one another, is a significant contribution to the discourse. Method, for Fry, discards the very density, the propensity for "error" which is the earmark of what we call "literary" But it is within the very structure of method that the literary arises to dismantle its claims, and it is here that Fry's rhetoric comes closest to that of contemporary (Lacanian) psychoanalysis. "What is missing from Aristotle's Wonderful is the 'irrational,' the truly *alogos*" (34). The unnamable, or that for which there are no words, comes to haunt the discourse of method. The unconscious interrupts the assumed mastery of method, dismantles the systematizing efforts of western metaphysics.

Fry uses three terms to oppose to method : interpretation, perception, and distraction. Interpretation in the rhetoric of contemporary criticism points to the impossibility of an (objective) outside, to the implication of knowledge in the rhetoric it is presumed to transcend. Perception and distraction are Fry's way of insisting on the discontinuities brought about by temporality, and his book links such discontinuity with the very triumphs of insight to which perception and sublimity refer. The movement of the Longinian sublime, which is taken up in the second chapter, "is disordered and traces a disorder" (30). Dismemberment, disorder, the skirting of the inarticulate, these are the significant moments for Longinus, and they come to rely not on a given outside, nor on the objectivity of knowledge but on the impossibility of separating, rhetorically or epistemologically, what we have created from what we have heard. Epistemology, in this tradition of sublimity, becomes subsumed in rhetoric, and the desire for knowledge is perceived, precisely, as *desire*. Figuration and sublimity, as Longinus

indicates, and as Neil Hertz so suggestively points out, cannot be separated, and this the undoing of "method" as a system of knowledge,

The problematics of knowledge and its intersection with figuration becomes the subject of essays on Dryden and Shelley. But Fry does not limit himself to following the rhetoric of poststructuralist discourse, which insists on the subsumption of knowledge into metaphor. His argument is rather, that at that intersection between epistemology and rhetoric there is "a liminal understanding of form" (85), and this concept of the threshold moves him from the rhetoric of poststructuralism to that of phenomenology. We know, from Heidegger, just how close those two positions can be. From his readings of Holderlin's poetry and language as the naming of Being, Heidegger moves to the deconstruction of logos. Fry insists, instead, on that liminal knowledge which renders objectivity problematic and which turns the best science, as Shelley says, into literature.

Fry devotes the final chapter of his book to Walter Benjamin, and through him to what he calls "a theory of asystematic understanding" No method, says Fry, can accomodate the inmethodical wandering of the mind, and Benjamin's "distraction" recognizes the pressures (temporality, the unconscious, the world) that prevent meaning from ever being fully present to itself, and that therefore prevent a true distinction between criticism and literature. If wholeness (the self-presence of meaning) is an illusion, then all literary texts are fragmentary, interrupted by their own unconscious. Longinus' notion of the fragment leads directly to the experience of the sublime, and for Benjamin "the movement of the sublime is the movement of distraction" (178). Fry points out that though critics perceive Benjamin's "aura" in opposition to his concept of distraction, aura arises out of a moment of distraction and is inseparable from it. Distraction is for Fry the contemporary version of sublimity, intersected by Freud's metaphor of the unconscious and his concept of the uncanny. The unconscious defies the will to mastery and closure, and the uncanny attests to that impossiblity. We are not present to ourselves as subjects any more than meaning is present to itself, and thus pressured by time we seek those moments of illumination which Fry terms "a grace beyond the reach of art" (3). This liminal category reaffirms Fry's notion of art as mediaton. If Heidegger is right that "the doctrine of a writer lies in what remains unsaid in his writing" quoted in Ned Lukacher's *Primal Sc nes* then otherness, error, dislocation, distraction mark out a trajectory towards a moment of vision. Otherness is not the opposite of vision, but the very condition of its occurrence Fry's book is an eloquent reminder of these possibilities.

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A, J. Smith, *The Metaphysics of Love*: Studies in Renaissance Love Poetry from Dante to Milton, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1985, pp. 349

Love as a concept in literature has been treated in several ways by theologians, preachers, poets, philosophers and writers alike since the dawn of human civilization. The book under review is one such challenging endeavour which attempts to study the entire gamut of European love, with particular emphasis on the Renaissance love poetry from Dante to Milton. The book is divided into six - sections, each section further containing some sub-sections. The age-old conflict and reconciliation between love - sacred and profane, tangible and intangible, infinite and ephemeral - Constitute the central theme which runs through all the sections. The introduction of the book entitled "Preamble : The Linneage of Love" presents, in a capsule form, a preamble to what one may say, the constitution of love in the western world. It entails an extensive survey of the evolution as well as linneage of love right from Herackitus and Empedocles through plato, Aristotle, St. Paul, St. Augustine to many other Neoplatonic and Christian philosophers ot the Middle Ages.

The argument in section one ("Sense and Innocensus") of the book grows out of a close contrast between Dante's idea of tempestuous passion and Milton's notion of innocent love. Throrgh a comparative glance at the contrasting kisses between Adam and Eve on onehand, and paolo and Francesca on the other, the author sharply points out that Milton strives for physical fruition in wedded love in which there is an "understanding between innocent sense and the tranguil gratification of the mind". Dante. on the other hand, in the light of the courtly ardour of the unattainable lady's 'invincible chastity, transcends the realm of sex in guest of a 'secret rose"

In section two of the book, the author tries to establish the suzerainty of the love of Petrarch's Laura which nullifies the tyranny of death. Laura's mortal love in *I Triofi* achieves spiritual glory finally affording a hope of eternal fulfilment. The love poems of Michel angelo, Shakespeare and Spenser, too, tend to reconcile sense and spirit.

Section three Yokes sense with spirit in metaphysical poetry, particularly in John Donne. Considering love an active state of mutual enterprise, Donne in his Poetry and prose treats human nature essentially in terms of a subtle-knot of body and spirit. The author successfully points out as to how the union between flesh an Flesh is made possible in Donne towards making of "One Flesh"

Section four discusses, in nutshell, the decadence of a long European tradition of love - the dilemma of sense and spirit - in the caroline lyric poets such as Stanley. Lovelace, Suckling and Carew, who, in the midst of perpetual uncertainty,

frailty of human desire, and scepticism, consider love a victim to the world of flux. Even the post - Restoration love poetry of Etherage, Sedley and Buck hurst treot love as a mere "glow upon the blind biological urge "(p. 247)

However, in Section five, the author revives, through an elaborate discussion on Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans*, the dilapidating hope ot attaining spiritual sublimity through love and successfully reconciles "sensibility with understanding" with a hope "to see Eternity the other right" (p. 257).

In the concluding section, the author once again recollects the telling contrast between Milton's pattern of human love and Dante's pining for the intelligible vision of love.

Within a limited canvass of 349 Pages, Smith has delicately handled a much discussed problem of human psyche in a style which is strikingly modern. What is more important about the book is the contrasting attitude towards sacred and profane love presented in each section, which involves wide - ranging experiences and critical scholarship. The book, it is needless to say, will be of immense help to the researchers and readers of love literature in general and to the scholars of comparative literature in particular.

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P. D. Juhl, *Interpretation : An Essay in the Philosophy of Criticsm*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey : 1980, pp x+332.

Juhl's book purports to provide an analysis of the concept of meaning and interpretation of a literary work. His thesis is that what a work means is what its author intended it to mean. As its corollary, Juhl claims that the propositions or beliefs a work expresses or conveys are attributable to, not an "implied author", but rather the real historical author, and, further that a work has logically one and only one correct interpretation. Juhl thus sets up an interesting controversy with a variety of theorists : the anti-intentionalists like Wimsatt and Beardsley, Wayne Booth, the structuralists and post-stru cturalists. He also distinguishes himself from such influential anti-intentionalists like E. D. Hirsch and claims a logical work and the connection between the meaning of a author's intention unlike the latter who merely recommends such a connection.

Juhl uses 'intuition' in the sense of what an author meant by the words he used when he wrote a certain sequence of words. Intention is thus different from what the anthor planned to write or to convey his 'motive' of writing or the sustained focal effect of the work. Juhl's concept of intuition is related to his view that a literary work is an utterance, an instance of the use of language by its

author. Arguing against Beardsley, Juhl claims that the meaning of a *sentence* may depend upon "public conventions of usage" but the meaning of an *utterance*, the use of sentence by a speaker, depends on what the speaker intends to mean by the sentence, the dependence of utterance-meaning on the speaker's in tention is best seen in the interpretation of ambiguous sentences. Juhl argues for the relevance of author's intuition its interpreting allusion and irony in a literary work.

After making this preliminary case for the author's intention, Juhl goes over to detailed evidence in support of his claim. The appeal to the text commonly made in interpreting a literary work is shown to be basically an appeal to the author's intuition. Textual features are evidence of what a work means in virtue of being evidence of what the author meant. Similarly, the appeal to the context and rules of language turns out to be related to the author's intuition. The distinct-tion between the speaker or narrator and the author of a work does not support the claim that the meaning of a literary work is not what the author intended. For what the speaker or narrator means is what the author has him mean. The function of stage directions in a play, of explanatory comments or notes, and the use of parallel passages in interpretation support this claim. In chapter VI, Juhl demonstrates that even aesthetic considerations proposed by the antiintuitionalists frequently depend cn assumptions about the author such that they are in fact evidence of his intuition, Juhl's intuitionalists thesis can thus adequately account for the meanings and implications of a work's detail if intending is not mistakenly assimilated to planning by the author.

Chapter VII "Life, Literature and the Implied Author"—is a radical re-examination of the autonomist thesis through discussions of Empson on Housman, Crane on *Gulliver's Travels* Book IV and Booth on Fielding and others in his *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Juhl shows that if a work expresses certain propositions, then its author is committed to the corresponding beliefs and to their truth. The final chapter addressed to the problem of varying interpretations of a literary work poses great difficulty, to the theorist of intuiton. Juhl, however, is wisely tentative and indirect and provides some arguments for the claim that a literary work has one and only one correct interpretation. Since, there can not be logically incompatible readings of a text, it is intelligible to suppose that only one of the possible readings of a work is correct. The inexhaustibility of a work and the variety of interpretations are explained in terms of Hirsch's distinction between *meaning* and *significance*.

In a long appendix, Juhl adds an examination of the doctirne of *verstehen* as

developed by Peter Szondi and argues against the latter that an interpretation of a literary work can in principle be objectively confirmed and hence is not a matter of subjective experience, personal preference, or individual taste. Despite its persuasiveness and logical vigour, Juhl's book is less likely to silence the anti-intentionalists but will surely provoke them to more forceful rebuttals.

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